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PERIODICALS

EDITORIAL

THE MISSILES OF NOVEMBER

A nuclear winter is settling over Europe. It is not the cosmic cold wave hypothesized by Carl Sagan but the continental cold war provoked by the introduction of American missiles. In Britain, Prime Minister Thatcher welcomes the cruise to Greenham Common. In France, President Mitterrand sees "war at our door" and with classic Gallic egoism, tells his people, "I am the deterrent." In Germany, hundreds of thousands of protesters are in the streets, while the Social Democratic Party demolishes the Western European postwar political consensus and denounces NATO nuclear policy. In Italy, U.S. military planes sneak cruises onto an American air base piece by piece, fearful of adverse reaction to their installation at Comiso, Sicily. In Geneva, the Soviet negotiators walked out of the medium-range missile talks. It looks like the crisis is only beginning.

But although everyone seems to agree that the situation is explosive, no one agrees on the nature of the threat. It is clear that only the Pentagon claims the Russians are planning to move or shoot across Central Europe. The French and the British, however, are not so sure about the docility of the West Germans; they see the installation of the missiles as a projection of U.S. power designed to discourage what a London *Observer* columnist called the "restless, unpredictable element" and the "anxious patriotism" of the historic Teutonic enemy.

The West German missile command hopes the new weapons will keep the peace movement at bay and thus disarm any attempt to weaken NATO's hegemony and detach Western Europe from America. For the missiles' role is to keep the lid on Western Europe—NATO's mission from the start—rather than to fend off foreign attacks. The launchers may be pointed east, but they are aimed at targets close to home.

WHILE SOMEONE ELSE IS EATING—V
Mary Lee Settle

PROTEST IN CHILE
Cynthia Brown

PINK-COLLAR UNIONS
Ruth Milkman

'VIETNAM': HOMOGENIZED HISTORY
Peter Biskind

WILLIAM TREVOR
Bernard McCabe

'OLD DOG'
Robert Penn Warren

COPYRIGHTING HISTORY

WHAT'S NEW ON WHAT'S REALLY NEWS

VICTOR NAVASKY

Judge Irving Kaufman, writing the majority opinion for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit on November 17, ruled, in effect, that *The Nation* is not a crook. He held that our April 7, 1979, story on Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon didn't violate Ford's copyright merely because it was based on a leaked copy of the former President's memoirs. Judge Kaufman said a lot of other things, among them that copyright law "was not meant to obstruct the citizens' access to vital facts and historical observations about our nation's life."

These are times when the White House appears to claim virtually unlimited Presidential prerogatives in the domain of information policy (keeping the press out of Grenada, cutting off government whistle-blowers' access to the press, making it more difficult to obtain documents under the Freedom of Information Act, prohibiting former government officials from ever writing about their experiences without prior censorship). So it is reassuring, and to his credit, to be told by a man who has been excoriated in our pages on more than one occasion, that even the President is subject to limits: that he does not own history; that he cannot withhold news for private profit and then authorize his publisher to sue those who succeed in breaking his self-serving embargo; and that he should not invoke the legitimate copyright protection that all authors enjoy in order to establish a private monopoly on the facts. (Copyright, said the Court, is designed to protect "expression.")

The Nation fought this case, aided by PEN, *The New York Review of Books*,

(*Continued on Page 555*)

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LETTERS.

THE ROSENBERGS' LEGACY

New York City

Andrew Kopkind and I haven't agreed on politics for years. Now, after reading his account of the debate at Town Hall ["Passion Play," *The Nation*, Nov. 5], I wonder about his competence and fairness as a reporter.

For example, he writes that it was I who interviewed the three ex-Communists who subsequently claimed they were misquoted in *The Rosenberg File*. In fact it was made clear during the debate that Ronald Radosh conducted those interviews.

That's a minor matter compared with Kopkind's charge that Radosh, Joyce Milton and I are "culturally ambitious 'former' radicals who have made a bitter peace with repression by agreeing with many of its points." I wonder if Kopkind could be more concrete about my alleged "cultural" ambitions? I now write for *The Village Voice*. Is that an example of ambition? Or would I have to graduate to *Time* and begin to be seen at the better discos?

I'd be even more intrigued to see some evidence to support his statement that I have "made a bitter peace with repression." In what I wrote on the Rosenberg case I made it clear that (1) Ethel Rosenberg was framed; (2) the death sentence was an abomination; and (3) the case was used by the government to fan the flames of the cold war. I have never written in defense of, or apologized for, political repression of the left.

If anyone is at peace with repression it's Kopkind, who responded to the Vietnamese concentration camps and the plight of the boat people with a great shrug, and who has written that the Soviet Union today plays a progressive role in the world.

Kopkind seems bored with facts about the Rosenbergs. His argument is that we ought to be discussing the real legacy of the case, which is political repression. Very well then; I propose that we have another public debate. Let us argue about repression—but not just in America. I'm curious to see where Kopkind and other *Nation* stalwarts come down on the issue of political rights and freedom in the world today. *Sol Stern*

'AN APOLOGY FOR THE PARTY'

King of Prussia, Pa.

Andrew Kopkind's well-written piece on the October 20 Town Hall debate on the Rosenberg case unfortunately closes with an apology for the Communist Party, U.S.A. that comes close to rewriting history. While Kopkind admits that Ronald Radosh's "highly charged polemic" correctly emphasized "the dynamic of destruction," he charges that Radosh was "all wrong in his particular description." In Kopkind's analysis, the dynamic of destruction is found in McCarthyism, which is true enough, but he then asks us to consider the party of the 1930s and 1940s a pathetic victim of repression.

In that period, the party operated as an extension of the Soviet Communist Party. It had little use for the health of the democratic left, and exploited its friends and members with the same self-righteous zeal displayed by French planters in Indochina. As a Stalinist arm, the party shared the same dynamic of destruction that McCarthyism revealed. Karen Rosenberg's book review in the same issue makes that clear ["Of Compromise and Corruption"].

Let's not weep for the old party as "victim." Surely we know too much now to pass off its rape of the democratic left as "ideological mistakes" and "strategic errors." If the relationships among capitalism, socialism and communism have changed since the 1940s; if we have all become much more humble; if we need to still our knee-jerk responses to the "Soviet bear"—so be it. But we don't have to rehabilitate the party of the 1930s and 1940s in the process.

Not everyone who sees those old days differently today is "culturally ambitious." Nor does their sobering imply that they "have made a bitter peace with repression by agreeing to many of its points." Those "who still can remind us all of what used to be" can also help us recall that spectacles come in many colors, and romanticism hangs on tenaciously. *John Stevens Kerr*

COMMUNISTS, NOT SECRET AGENTS

Torrance, Calif.

As a writer for the *Daily Worker* and member of the Communist Party from 1936 through 1957 (except during World War II), I want to assure Andrew Kopkind that I have not "come to believe what was said [of the Communists]." Nor do I sum up my Communist experience with the words "invalid, ineffectual and self-destructive." If I had gone through life devoting whatever talents and energies I possess only toward personal gain, making no effort to help others, I would feel invalid.

Despite Kopkind's somewhat overwrought notion of what repression of Communists did to our psyches, my quarrel is not with his basically fair essay on the Town Hall debate. It is with the implication by Ronald Radosh, Joyce Milton and Sol Stern that espionage was part of the business of being an American Communist.

I am not naïve or romantic about the Communist Party, U.S.A. We conducted some cruel little repressions of our own, and were guilty of sheeplike acceptance of shallow rationalizations and monumental stupidities. (Though I think we would have had to go further to equal the crimes and stupidities of the Republican and Democratic Parties!)

Yet consider: The F.B.I. boasted that for all those years it had the party riddled with agents (hardly the great feat it was made out to be in "B" movies). And what single thing did the agents most dearly want to deliver to the boss? Why, proof of espionage in the service of the Soviet Union. J. Edgar's borers-from-within could never produce what he wanted. The party was never even charged with espionage.

May I add that in all my years on the staff of the party's mouthpiece, working one floor below the national office (and for some time as a section education director receiving materials from the national office), I never heard even the whisper of a suggestion that any Communist commit espionage. Anybody who advocated that at a meeting would have been booted out for being a police agent. Had I ever been asked to commit espionage in behalf of another country, I would have quit and denounced the party. I wrote exactly that in the *Daily Worker* more than once in challenging earlier liars to produce their evidence.

Is this important? Does it matter to America? Kopkind's conclusion seems to suggest that it has all died down to a tempest in a teacup, a passion play featuring irrelevant ghosts of the past. But if the distinction between having a starry-eyed view of the world's first country to proclaim itself socialist and being an agent of that country is not important, then there is no problem whatsoever with the persistent lie that Americans who strive for something better than capitalist exploitation are not real Americans. On this Radosh and Milton must be called to account. *Lester Rodney*

REPRESSION FROM ALL SIDES

Newton, Mass.

Andrew Kopkind's editorial on the Rosenbergs brings an important fact into the daylight. Kopkind cites repression as the key to understanding the Rosenberg case; i.e., that America used the case to repress ("delegitimize") the leaders of its left opposition. No doubt true. But the repression was, and is, more widespread than that.

The shouting match that the Town Hall debate became, with catcalls emerging from both sides of the stage and from the audience, provides an excellent example. The Rosenberg case is unique in its ability to whip up emotion to the point that neither side can sit down and politely listen to the other's argument. Even the nuclear arms and abortion debates are not so charged. Each side attempts to stifle the other and proclaim its own perspective as the whole truth. A case that attracts such repression from both sides must surely epitomize our national neurosis on the issue of communism. *John R. Haule*

There will be more letters on the Rosenberg debate next week. *—The Editors*

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EDITORIALS.

What's New

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Scientific American, The New York Times, The Progressive and The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, who filed amicus briefs on our behalf; and by Pulitzer Prizewinning author David Halberstam, media critic and author of a book on Ford's Presidency Richard Reeves, former president of CBS News Fred Friendly and the president of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Richard Seaver, who testified in our behalf. But the victory is not ours alone.

Although the decision reaffirmed the traditional copyright doctrine of "fair use," it was a win for the First Amendment, for the public's need to know and for and publishers, who share a collective stake in the fr to report and the need for plural approaches to c porary history.

Nevertheless, no sooner had the decision been ann than it was misconstrued. Richard Snyder, chair Simon & Schuster, urged Harper & Row to appeal "I still look on publishing copyrighted material with mission as sheer theft, the same as somebody brea your house and stealing your television set." Su runs counter to the public interest and to the Firs ment interest which all publishers ought to hold in with their authors. We suspect that when Snyder chance to read the decision and review the trial tra

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its merits, he may conclude that such sentiments are even against self-interest.

There are some widespread misconceptions about the case that a study of the records would correct:

§ That *The Nation* "stole" an advance copy of the Ford manuscript. *Fact*: A source who had authorized access to the manuscript and who was upset that Harper & Row had put it under wraps asked us if we would like to read an advance copy. This differs from everyday leaks only in that it took place at the moment that Ford was attempting to cash in on public disclosure of his acts via publication. We said yes, and the rest is history.

§ That *The Nation* "excerpted" the Ford memoirs prior to publication. *Fact*: We published a 2,250-word story *about* the memoirs, which quoted approximately 300 copyrightable words (by the Court's count, 229 by our count) from a 454-page, 200,000-word book. This was well within the "fair use" permitted by the copyright law "for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting . . ." We cleared the article with our attorney before publishing it.

§ That because of *The Nation*'s story, *Time* "refused" to proceed with its plans to serialize the Ford book, and as a result Harper & Row lost the $12,500 it was owed for serialization rights. *Fact*: After *The Nation*'s story appeared, *Time* called Harper & Row and asked to publish its excerpt a week earlier than scheduled. The magazine was well within its rights, since its contract provided that if any portion of the material appeared elsewhere first, the terms could be renegotiated. Harper & Row refused, presumably preferring to bring a test case rather than obtain the publicity benefits of serialization in *Time*. As a consequence, *Time* canceled its plans, and subsequently declined to join Harper & Row as plaintiff.

That what *The Nation* published was not news because much of it had emerged in testimony by Ford in congressional hearings on the pardon. *Fact*: Even Judge Thomas Meskill in his dissent conceded that the lower court's ruling "that *The Nation* article was not news was clearly erroneous," and acknowledged that it was dangerous for courts to place their judgments above those of editors, writers and publishers. At the time *The Nation* story appeared, both Ford and Alexander Haig were prominently mentioned as candidates for the Republican nomination for President in 1980. The story of Ford's association with Haig and subsequent previously undisclosed conversations with his aides led us to conclude that Ford probably made a deal: if Nixon would agree to resign, Ford would pardon him before he could be indicted. Ford then tried to cover up the deal by reading a formal denial into a telephone call to Haig. We chose to present this material in the form of a news story rather than as an editorial precisely because the new facts in conjunction with those that had previously emerged seemed so newsworthy.

That even if *The Nation* did not quote an excessive number of copyrighted words, it was guilty of wholesale piracy." *Fact*: Far from paraphrasing Ford—i.e., changing our words for his but retaining his narrative and argument—we consciously exorcised the context of innocence within which Ford presented the pardon negotiations and reorganized the facts to let them speak for themselves.

§ That by bringing suit, Harper & Row and *Reader's Digest* were somehow standing up for authors' rights. *Fact*: When Ford granted his ghostwriter, Trevor Armbrister, access to his Presidential papers at the University of Michigan, access was denied to twenty other writers and researchers, including a reporter for Jack Anderson. Our position is that at the instant an official archive is drawn on by a former public official for writing a book, it should be made available to all writers, researchers and scholars.

Here, President Ford wore two hats. As a writer he was entitled to copyright his "expression." As a former public official he was not entitled to monopolize the secrets to which he gained access while on the public payroll. In any event, it is cynical for a publisher to claim it is protecting writers' rights when PEN and the Reporters Committee, the only writers' organizations to enter the case, signed briefs in behalf of *The Nation*. Moreover, as a result of the Harper & Row lawsuit it has come out that this "writer" used a ghostwriter, that he has no gift for the telling anecdote (the ghostwriter testified to that in court), that he and Betty Ford were paid $1 million for their labors (a fact the publisher was obliged not to disclose under its contract with Ford) and that he contracted not to comment substantively on public issues discussed in his book until copies of it were in the stores. Also, Harper & Row neglected to consult its author before turning down *Time*'s offer to publish a week early.

This was a suit that should never have been brought. As *The Times* pointed out in its amicus brief, once *The Nation* was leaked a prepublication copy of President Ford's forthcoming memoirs, the decision to publish a news article about it was "hardly novel." *The Times* published a news story on revelations about Ford contained in John Dean's *Blind Ambition* a month and a half before that book was released. It published a news story about Richard Nixon's forthcoming autobiography, setting forth Nixon's reactions to Watergate based on "164 pages of completed manuscript" which had been "closely guarded." Also, in 1978, *The Washington Post* published a story on *The Ends of Power* by H.R. Haldeman, having apparently secured an unauthorized copy from the printer.

What social good, we have been asked, comes from publishing a magazine article about a book that will in any event emerge in a matter of weeks? First, we submit that this is the wrong question. One might more appropriately ask, What social harm might stem from trying to punish a paper or periodical for publishing the news? Second, we are alarmed at the phenomenon of autobiographical protectionism. Here's why: Had *The Nation* run a post-publication book review arguing that Ford's dealings with Haig were really a deal, our audience for that argument would have been limited to our modest subscription list. By publishing as soon as we had the information contained in the Ford memoirs, we saw an opportunity to reach the

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widest public with our hypothesis, and thus help prevent further cover-ups by a man who might again be President.

If all of the above is right, why did Harper & Row and *Reader's Digest*, respectable publishers both, bring their suit in the first place? That, of course, is a question more properly put to them than to us. But permit us to state a suspicion. According to Ford's contract, he and Betty got $1 million for their respective memoirs. In the absence of the promised "revelations" of inside knowledge (highly touted in Harper & Row's advance press releases) that Ford acquired while on the public payroll, the memoirs might have been worth less than half that much. The purpose of the suit, then, was to protect the publisher's future inflated investment in memoirs of high-level public officials. When a public official has the literary style and imagination of a Churchill or an Acheson or even a Kissinger, advance stories are no problem. They whet the public's interest in the book. But when the value of a book is in its secrets—its facts—prepublication stories may dissipate whatever advance interest there is. At the trial, the publishers' lawyer denied it was a test case, even though Harper & Row president Brooks Thomas had previously told a meeting of PEN that the purpose of the suit was to test the law. Why else spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees to recover $12,500, or what he estimated would be "some folding chairs and pencils," from a low-budget magazine like *The Nation*? And forgive us for suggesting that they chose *The Nation* on the theory that a poverty-stricken journal with progressive tendencies would be less able to mount a strong legal defense than our more establishmentarian brethren.

What the publishers failed to anticipate was that attorneys such as Floyd Abrams and his colleagues at Cahill Gordon and Reindel and organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union would see a principle at stake and make a vast investment of their time and energy in our behalf. These are people and institutions that have fundamental commitments to the First Amendment, to be sure, but they are also deeply committed, as we are, to the culture of publishing in a free society, and our defense gained strength from their belief that in this particular case, the aims of the copyright law and of the First Amendment were not only not in conflict, they were congruent.

We have, of course, no way of knowing whether our opponents will appeal or how our argument would be received in the Burger Court if it decided to hear the case. However, it was encouraging to read that even before the decision was handed down, Congress began considering legislation mandating that Presidential memoirs prepared by a taxpayer-subsidized staff be published by the Government Printing Office. Other ideas that deserve consideration are a Presidential memoirs tax (providing that a percentage of royalties go to a nonprofit cause) and new language in the copyright law that would clarify the "fair use" doctrine where the memoirs of former high-level public officials are involved. Those possibilities ought to be explored by the appropriate Congressional committees in order to take the profit out of the Presidency.

The Debt Cartel

Recently, representatives of several Latin American countries met in Mexico City to discuss ways they might cooperate to solve their debt problems with U.S. banks and the International Monetary Fund. Concerted action by debtor nations in Central and South America would be a welcome development. It's time those countries presented a united front—a kind of debt cartel. As a first step toward extricating the region from its current financial predicament, such a cartel should declare a five-year moratorium on payment of all interest and principal owed to U.S. and other foreign banks.

Maintaining a united front will, of course, be difficult for a group of countries with such diverse economic systems, resource bases and forms of government. And the banks would almost certainly use every kind of pressure to undermine their unity. But the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries has held together much longer than its critics had predicted, and there is no insurmountable obstacle to successful cooperation among the Latin Americans.

A debt moratorium would have many benefits. Most immediately, it would free up public funds for the purchase of food from abroad and the creation of jobs at home, thus alleviating human misery. A multilateral moratorium would, to be sure, cause a serious upheaval among U.S. multinational banks, but that is surely less important than the suffering caused by the effort required to pay off the loans.

Beyond the hardships debts are causing in Latin America, the reforms demanded by the I.M.F. and the banks as conditions for making rollover loans are stifling economic growth. More than half the money Latin American nations earn from their exports goes to the banks, when it should be paying for tools and raw materials.

A moratorium would actually benefit U.S. exporters and their employees. Most of the additional imports that Latin American nations could buy with the money they save would be made in the United States, helping put Americans back to work.

A further advantage of a debt cartel is that it would increase trade and economic cooperation among member countries. Already, as a result of their strapped financial conditions, these nations have cut imports and are relying more on domestically produced goods. They are also increasing trade with one another, often through barter agreements that avoid the use of scarce foreign exchange.

Since a moratorium could touch off a financial crisis in this country, the left should work for a plan that would cushion the shock, protecting taxpayers and jobholders. The officers and stockholders of the multinational banks should bear the brunt of the losses. As Michael Moffitt writes in his new book, *The World's Money*, the banks "are addicted to the game" and "keep it going by making it bigger and riskier." Rather than being bailed out by the Federal government, those primarily responsible for the world financial follies should be held accountable for their greed.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Les Janka is a registered Republican. He has worked for four Republican Administrations, and for some years served as a special assistant to Henry Kissinger. His stomach is, therefore, quite strong and in excellent repair. He has few qualms about the major positions of the Reagan Administration. But he has taken the rare step of resigning from the White House on a point of principle. He has no desire to damage his former colleagues, but in our recent conversation it became evident that this Administration is not shy of demagogy and manipulation when it comes to American public opinion. As he put it, "If the Nixon Administration had had the media skills of this one, the country would be in real trouble."

Janka's problems began when as a senior foreign policy spokesman in the White House Press Office, he was told lies about Grenada and, unwittingly and in good faith, passed them on to reporters. Quite correctly, he resents having led astray friends in the press corps whose opinion of his integrity matters to him. But equally correctly, he minds having been the means of deceiving the public. "Ronald Reagan doesn't play to the media, he plays *to* the people *through* the media," he said. (It's a distinction few of the Democratic candidates appreciate.)

On the Monday before the U.S. invasion (which we are now asked to call by some euphemism), Janka was given what he calls "misleading and false" information to relay. "I misled eight or nine good friends," he says, "and we were being told things an hour and a half after the Russians and the Cubans were told them." CBS, which Janka says did have the right story about the invasion, was told its information was "preposterous." Others were sent down deceitful sidetracks. This, he told me, violated a specific and detailed promise made to him when he joined the staff. He was given an undertaking at that time that he would be trusted to know things in advance, the better to explain them when they occurred. How else should a seasoned foreign service officer be expected to operate? It turned out that he was to be the victim as well as the purveyor of disinformation.

The day after the invasion, when the truth could no longer be concealed by Larry Speakes and his blow-dried associates, there was another serious development. It became obvious that no independent reporting of the landing would be permitted. This, Janka described as "constitutionally wrong and politically dumb. We don't have an Official Secrets Act in this country, and the argument about the 'safety' of the media is phony."

As a result, Janka wrote a letter of resignation. But his trials were not yet over. He was accused by Speakes of spreading rumors that other staff members would follow suit. He was also accused of leaking his own resignation through unauthorized channels. His denial of those two allegations (which denial was honest, as I have learned through independent corroboration) was not believed. As a result, reporters and news agencies were contacted by quite senior White House officials and told that Janka had not resigned but had been fired. "The White House couldn't stand the idea that somebody would resign on principle," he said. I pressed him to tell me who had originated that cute little story, but beyond stating it wasn't Larry Speakes, he refused to say. I mention this because it is important that Janka not be misinterpreted as speaking out of rancor. He declined, on the day of his resignation, to talk to the networks.

Despite his reserve on these and other points, the picture of the White House media operation that emerges from his account is not a very salubrious one. The Administration has shown that it knows how to draw from the same emotional well as George Wallace and Spiro Agnew. It exploits anti-intellectual and antimedia instincts among the populace to beat the pointy heads and the smart alecks. This has the excellent and intended result of keeping the patriotic populace in the dark and running foreign policy on loyalty alone. It may be feasible for a while, but watch out. Janka, who was hired for his expertise on the Middle East, says that in that area the problem is somewhat different: "The Administration *does* tell the truth as it perceives it; it's just that its perceptions are all wrong. It has failed to make the case for the presence of American troops in Lebanon."

In what Janka calls this "very dangerous situation, where public opinion is manipulated rather than managed," one gets a few insights into the way the President mesmerizes the Democrats. They've been reduced to the level of those curious fellow passengers whom one observes clapping when a pilot makes a routine landing. They are either scared of Reagan or envious of him or modeling themselves on him, while he reaches clear over their heads, and over the heads of the media, to talk directly to the voters. "Directly" does not mean honestly or straightforwardly.

At this very moment the Administration is engaged in a severe tussle with UNESCO about that body's ludicrous and sinister plan for a "new world information order." If the scheme were ever enacted, it would mean the licensing of journalists by Third World governments and the dissemination of news by state-run agencies. None of the pseudo-radical rhetoric attached to the proposal can conceal that. American delegates have had great fun ridiculing it, and I can't think offhand of a single conservative columnist who hasn't taken a poke or a swing at it on a slow day. Yet here we have the Reagan Administration attempting to conscript the press and marshal public opinion, and there's nary a squeak from the Free Worlders. That, perhaps, was to be expected. But as it gradually becomes clear what sort of occupation regime is being designed for Grenada, and as the excuses for the attack dissolve one by one in retrospect, it is the White House's use both of *suggestio falsi* and *suppressio veri* that sticks in the memory. Maybe I shouldn't act surprised at this official mendacity. But it certainly came as a surprise to Les Janka, who was straight enough to quit and who becomes the only Reaganite to emerge with any credit from the whole affair.

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ARTICLES.

WHILE SOMEONE ELSE IS EATING—V

The Story of a Company Man

This is the fifth in a series of articles about how some people are being made to live in America today. The writers are all novelists or poets, and they were asked to write about the human costs of President Reagan's policies. The idea was to free them from all the constraints of journalism save one: that of grounding their work in reality. The articles will be published by Doubleday/Anchor Press in the collection titled While Someone Else Is Eating.

The story below differs somewhat from the others in the series. Although grounded in reality, it is written as fiction. Mary Lee Settle explains why she chose this mode: "In my story I have tried to draw attention to another kind of economic neglect. This man is as much a victim of the inhuman economic decisions of the Reagan Administration as any other man who has lost his life-support system. The story is fiction because I wanted it to convey fragments of observations on the lives of a whole body of 'good Americans' at management level who are doubly forgotten—forgotten not only by the corporations that have betrayed them but by the system of values they have taken for granted and helped to sustain."

MARY LEE SETTLE

Like the elder son in the story of the prodigal, my cousin Edgar's virtues were never attractive to me. He always did everything right. I never thought we had much in common, which is the genteel way of saying that I always disliked his tight face, his mustache, his shoes, his politics. I remember him as tall. When I see him I'm surprised that he isn't. He was the kind of man who made a vocal point of not cheating on his income tax, although when there was, in his words, a "Democrat regime," he squealed like a stuck pig. His form was always filed by January 31.

I felt diminished and somehow ciphered by him. He exuded a kind of judgmental neatness. His life, as he often said, was the Company—no, not the C.I.A., although I think he might have dreamed of that, as lesser people in his eyes, myself included, dream of flight. The Company was a subsidiary that made some chemical he didn't talk about. I think it was something that hardened steel. It was the only industry in one of those company towns that stretch along the narrow mountain valleys of West Virginia. The parent company, as he called it, is in New York City.

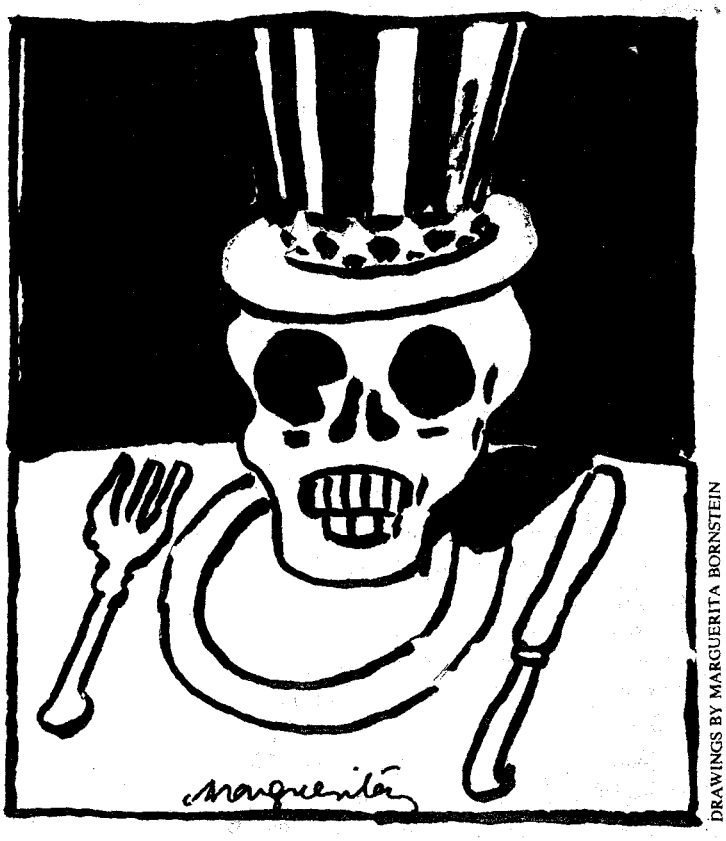
When his wife died, I think his loyalty to the Company filled the gulf she had left. It permeated the whole house, from the garbage cans to the two-car garage (one car, hers, used only on Saturdays to keep it in running order) to the color TV, the den and the shaved grass. I always saw that loyalty as green, bright green, fertilized loyalty. He never bragged about any of this. I think he never considered that he needed to. It was simply a world he had every reason to take for granted.

His den was paneled in wormy pine. The first time I saw it, twenty years ago, he pointed this out.

He said, "Wormy pine. Wormholes cost an arm and a leg, let me tell you!" Then he grinned and his mustache widened. He was 35 then, and the mustache was already showing faint gray threads. Then he said, apologizing to himself, "It was an excellent investment."

Through the years, the Company spread over one wall, and I could imagine him at night at his desk, swiveling around to look at it. There was his chemical engineering degree from Carnegie Tech (he had "gone into management" later); a golf trophy from the Company country club on a wall bracket; a certificate for outstanding service that looked like an honorary degree; a framed form letter from President Nixon, thanking him for his work in the 1968 election; and photographs of groups at picnics, dinners, conventions, even in front of the Pyramids. He was inevitably in the second row, his mustache grayer and grayer.

Two years ago, when I went back for my grandmother's funeral, nothing had changed or been moved. There were a few more photographs. The silver double frame on his desk was the same one I had always remembered. It contained the imitation Bachrachs with backlighting taken when his wife



DRAWINGS BY MARGUERITA BORNSTEIN

Mary Lee Settle's latest novel, The Killing Ground *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux), won the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize for fiction.*

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was 40 and his daughter was 15. Both of them were smiling.

In those days, in the sixties, they seemed to enjoy themselves. They gave cocktail parties—in the living room in winter, and in the back garden in summer. The men always stood on one side, the women on the other. In summer their heels sank into the turf. Nobody drank too much or raised their voice. The Company seemed to be present among the trees. Late in the evening the women confessed to using Miracle-Gro.

They were untouched by the tumultuous decade of the sixties, though they freely expressed opinions damning everything about it. They were "for" the Vietnam War. Every Fourth of July, Edgar unfurled an American flag with forty-eight stars. His wife was a busy, likable woman. She volunteered. There were long telephone conversations that had to do with personalities and raising money. His daughter, called Mary Lou after her mother, swam the mile in record time. He was proud of them both. They seemed to me to be partly constructed out of Company policy and the L.L. Bean catalogue.

The Company arranged his mortgage and his insurance, both health and life. The mortgage was large. He explained every January that it was good business "taxwise"; that nobody but a fool paid off his mortgage. It was, he said, an investment. It saved taxes and the resale value was, in his word, "enhanced."

Two years ago, the subsidiary closed down. It happened suddenly on a Monday morning. When I saw him a few weeks later, I thought at first that the shock on his face was grief over the death of our grandmother. It wasn't. He was like a person who had been in an earthquake, terra no longer firma. The air had gone out of him and left him a little smaller. For a month there was 100 percent unemployment on the crescent of mock-colonial houses, but nobody called it that. Then neighbors began to move out, and FOR SALE signs went up for the first time since the subsidiary had opened, thirty years ago.

His daughter was then 35. She and her husband had bought a house two blocks away, where the lawns were very green and the azaleas a little too gaudy and the streets a series of pleasing arcs that curved up into the hills. None of the trees had been cut down as they are in cheaper housing developments, and everybody repainted every two years, and there seemed to be no mess anywhere. They did it to be near "Daddy."

Mary Lou and her husband, Elwood, a dentist whose main economic joke was "There's always toothaches," had become born-again Christians and members of the 700 Club. They did all the things that went with it. In the evenings she sold soap for Amway. They had the slight, superior, kindly smiles of people who were in on some kind of secret.

They gave up alcohol and cigarettes and swam at the "Y," fifteen miles away in Coalburg. The Company country club where she had spent her youth had closed down, and the fairway grass grew meadow-tall.

Edgar excused what had happened to him. He said he saw the necessity for amalgamation. "You've got to streamline in today's economy, let me tell you," he said at first. For a while he expected to be transferred, and his only complaint was that at 54 it would be hard for him to put down new roots. When he saw the parent company's stock begin to go up and up, he expected to be called back. When he wasn't, he went to the head office in New York and waited to be interviewed by men of 40, who were nice to him and said they would be in touch. He collared whoever he could to take to dinner at The Four Seasons. He stayed at the St. Regis. He said you must never lower your standard of living—"they" would notice. He took to visiting other chemical companies to let people know he was ready for a change.

He still defended the Company. He said management had tough decisions to make. "Boy, I've had to make plenty myself, let me tell you," he said. After his business trips to New York, he came back talking about "smart young fellows, let me tell you."

After a year he didn't go anymore. Gradually he had moved into his den; his living space diminished. I began to feel sorry for him but fought it; it seemed an insult to him. Mary Lou didn't. She talked incessantly about poor Daddy. She said she worried about him if he didn't call or come by every day. When he missed a day, he told her he had been busy. When he went to dinner at their house, once a week, he glued himself to the TV and watched the news as if it were wartime. From time to time he nodded. He explained supply-side economics and the trickle-down theory during the commercials. His comments were as rain on a parched and waiting soul.

Mary Lou and Elwood were kindness itself. She said it was their Christian duty after all. She looked through his refrigerator and cupboards to see that he wasn't neglecting himself. She walked around the empty dining room, the living room, the screened-in terrace, like a person inspecting rental property. She found a bottle of bourbon and took it away. The next day she found another one. She told me that Edgar had explained to her that it was for medicinal purposes.

But the day in early spring when she found four ounces gone, she cried, and then knelt on the living room floor and prayed aloud to a flock of china ducks across the wall. Beyond her profile I remember almost-naked branches of forsythia outside. The house was cold. She had asked me to go with her that day because she said it was getting too much for her. The whole place was as neat as a tomb. All the time she was praying, I just stood there, embarrassed. Her voice mingled with the slow beat of two fingers on a typewriter behind the closed door of the den.

He came out finally. He looked dusty. He had not shaved. His clothes, an old pair of jeans and a Miami Dolphins sweatshirt, hung on him. I wouldn't have guessed he owned such clothes. It was hard to look at him, so I looked away. He sensed it, and I heard him say, "I've got a little problem with my skin." Even his voice was thinner, light, like a man used to whispering.

He tried to make a joke: "Mary Lou, are you out here bobbing to Jesus again?" I could feel his smile on the side of my face. "We're all used to it, aren't we, honey?"

We? There wasn't any we—just the two of them, and me,

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who didn't want to be there. He touched my arm. "I sure am glad to see you, Coz," he said. "Damn, it's been too long."

He went straight to the abandoned sofa and said, "Mary Lou, honey, I've got to talk to you and I want Coz here to hear this. Now don't get all upset." She sat rigid, not looking at either of us. Obviously, "don't get all upset" had been the harbinger of bad news all her life. He told her that the house was too big for him, that he had put it on the market. They sat in the living room talking as if they didn't know each other very well. He said he was sure the house would bring a hundred "thou." He told me he had only paid forty "thou." "I've got my eye on a condo, maybe in Florida. After all . . . ," he said.

Mary Lou began to count assets. "Let's see . . . with your profit . . . your savings . . . let's see . . ."

Then it came out as if he wanted to get rid of it: "I've run through that."

She just stared at him. She looked like one of those comic-book cartoon characters with button eyes.

Edgar leaned back and stuck his feet way out over the carpet. He was wearing sneakers without socks. His whole body seemed to deflate with relief. He had lost the tension that comes with giving a damn. "I was investing in my future," he said, and he laughed.

There was not a sound.

Then he said, wanting to get it all over with, "I cashed in my life insurance." Silence. "Well, honey, this is it." He waved at the ducks and the picture window.

"Your *life* insurance," she finally spoke. The word "life" hit high C. "Daddy," a little lower but not by much, "why didn't you consult *us*?" High again. "You've abdicated all responsibility!" Then she began to cry.

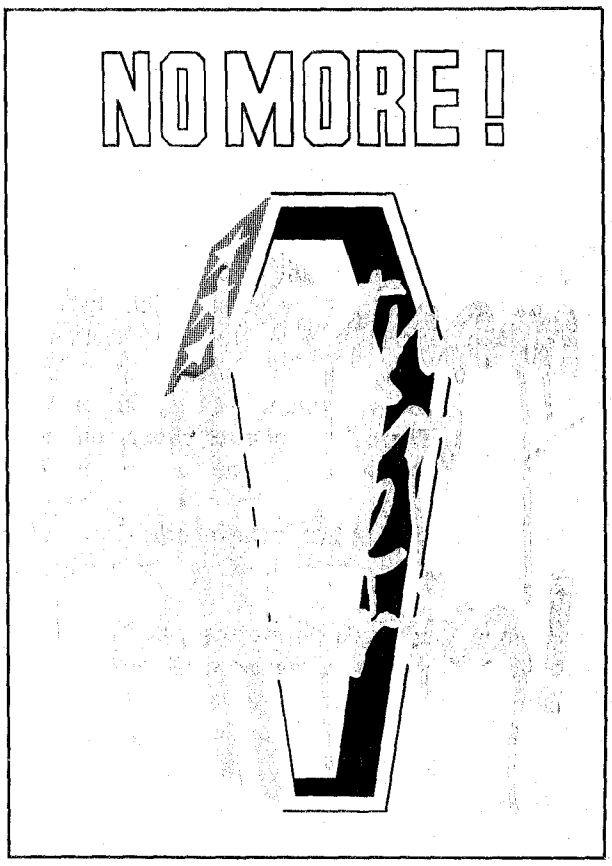
Six months ago the house was sold to a plumber from Coalburg, which has sent out tentacles of suburbs almost to the abandoned company town. Edgar didn't make much. Enough, he says, glaring at Mary Lou, to keep him in cigarettes and liquor.

There wasn't enough of what he now calls money, and what Mary Lou's husband, Elwood, still calls equity, to buy a condo or anything else. He lives with them. Mary Lou tells us all, not caring if he hears her, that it's their Christian duty and that they're glad to have him. You can hear her underline "glad."

She tells me it hasn't been easy. She says she told him that the guest room was his, that she wanted him to be entirely at home. But she says he just wasn't considerate. He wanted to hang all that old junk from his den on the wall even though she had just redecorated, and she simply couldn't let him do that. She says he keeps it in a box under his bed. He complains if little Mary Lou talks too long on the phone. He says he's expecting a call. "I had to put my foot down," Mary Lou says. "He ran up an exorbitant telephone bill, all those calls to New York. Nobody calls back."

Edgar says he is convinced that things are turning around.

The suburb has changed. There are pickup trucks in the driveways, and the grass looks like it has burst out of its



"No Vietnam War in Central America" Poster by Sam Wiener

The background of this poster, a military coffin and the inscription "No More" originated during the Vietnam War and was widely circulated. Now the well-known artist Sam Wiener, angered by the Reagan Administration's war efforts in Central America, has forcefully expressed his outrage by splashing a fiery-red protest over the original.

This poster, measuring 24½ by 19½ inches, is printed in three colors on high-gloss paper.

I would like_____posters at $4 each. Total _____
(Please add $1 for postage.) _____

Enclosed is my check for $_____

Orders of 5 or more are available for $3. per poster plus postage. Please inquire for special discounts on large quantity bulk orders.

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72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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prison. Elwood has grown a mustache too, and has begun to drink beer again. He watches the football games on Sunday. He has always tried to have a lot in common with his patients. When you go there, Mary Lou sends little Mary Lou to get "Gramps."

Little Mary Lou is 14, nearly six feet tall and on the Christian Brotherhood swim team. They show Gramps off. He is 56. Mary Lou has made some rules. She says she had to. He can smoke only in his room. No liquor. Edgar's breath smells strongly of peppermint. She said he sent out a whole file of résumés, without consulting her. He stays at home and waits for answers. Mary Lou says she can't get him out of the house. "He won't take a bit of exercise," she says, looking at him.

Elwood says he has to read the newspaper first, before he goes to work, and Mary Lou says that makes Gramps sulk. "He's spoiled rotten," she says, "but I keep telling him he's luckier than most. What if he had no place to go?" □

LET SLEEPING LIONS RISE

Protest in Chile—The Road Ahead

CYNTHIA BROWN

"We Chileans," wrote the nineteenth-century historian Vicuña MacKenna, "have the sleep of a groundhog and the waking of a lion." An organizer working in Santiago's slums put it somewhat differently: "Last year we had to let the junta's failures generate discontent; this year we've taken the offensive." The latest Day of National Protest, on November 18, more than bore out his words.

Since May, the mounting waves of protest have presented President Augusto Pinochet with the most serious challenge yet to his ten-year-old regime. Many middle-class and business people who supported the ouster of Salvador Allende are disenchanted with the junta's economic policies, which have brought Chile a 30 percent inflation rate and an avalanche of business failures. More than 30 percent of the work force is unemployed, and an additional 15 percent have temporary jobs which pay only $30 to $50 a month. As a result, the slums and *poblaciones* (working-class neighborhoods), where nearly two-thirds of Santiago's population lives, have become centers of increasingly militant protest.

The Chilean opposition still has a long way to go. Political, labor and human rights leaders with whom I recently spoke agreed that Pinochet has regained his balance and is in firm control, after a period of vulnerability in July and early August. The opposition's momentum has been interrupted by government reprisals and its cohesion damaged by tactical differences. Nevertheless, events since October suggest that short-term cooperation and even long-term alliance is possible. The lion is clearly awake, and years of difficult and dangerous organizing have begun to pay off.

With each month the protests have increased in size, frequency and duration. A demonstration in Santiago in October drew nearly 100,000 people and smaller protests erupted for three days afterward. But repression has also escalated to levels unknown since the aftermath of the 1973 coup. Some 2,600 people were arrested in August and 2,300 in September, compared with about 1,700 in all of 1982. In August the government announced that twenty-four demonstrators had been killed by police and military forces; sources in the Catholic Church, however, put the figure at eighty-six. The death toll only begins to suggest the ferocity of the government's crackdown, especially in the *poblaciones*. For the first time, police tortured people publicly. Those suspected of having engaged in antigovernment activities were beaten in front of their neighbors and families, or dragged into police vans and subjected to electric-shock torture by C.N.I. (secret police) agents using portable machines. Others were forced to extinguish bonfires with their bare hands and bodies. Many injured demonstrators who sought treatment at hospitals were arrested upon arrival. In addition to unleashing the police and the C.N.I., the regime imposed a 6:30 P.M. curfew, and on August 11, 18,000 soldiers patrolled the capital.

Security forces have also used psychological warfare to divide and disorient opponents. In the *poblaciones*, the emphasis is on terror. On the night of September 11, the tenth anniversary of Pinochet's coup, the police and the C.N.I. spread false rumors in the *poblaciones* that gangs from other neighborhoods were approaching, vandalizing and burning houses. Police warned the residents of Santa Adriana that 3,000 marauders from La Victoria were on their way, and then shut off the power. The hoax was perpetrated simultaneously in seven nearby neighborhoods as well, and tens of thousands of confused and frightened people huddled in their darkened homes.

To bring the restive middle class into line, the government prefers wooing to force. Historically, the middle class has played a decisive role in Chilean politics. More than any other single factor, its complacency in the years following the military takeover enabled the regime to consolidate its power. The fact that residents of middle-class neighborhoods joined the early protests by banging pots and pans (a technique last used in 1973 against Allende) helped bring the opposition to international attention.

But subsequent protests have shown that the movement has grown most rapidly among workers and the poor—that is, the less "respectable" members of society. Capitalizing on class antagonisms, the government has played on middle-class fears of disorder with propaganda about vandals coming out of the slums and extremists taking charge of the protest. At the same time, it has tried to appear flexible by offering political "concessions."

There is less to the concessions than meets the eye, however. For example, Pinochet has arbitrarily permitted some demonstrations while banning others, and the police con-

Cynthia Brown writes frequently on Chile and other Latin American countries for The Nation.

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tinue to beat up participants in both
lifted the state of emergency but ret
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Risk of Disruption of Internal Peace. I
government has periodically published li
ted to return home—nearly 3,000 pec
September—but according to the Comr
of Exiles, more than 1,000 of those list
in the country or living abroad for nc
The regime's most profitable conce
September, to enter into a Cathol
"dialogue," with the Democratic Allia
sition front that is dominated by the C
t unexpectedly appointed new generals to the
e key posts, and continued the repression.
gime's adept negotiator was Sergio Jarpa, who had
appointed Interior Minister in August to orchestrate a
-called political opening. Although U.S. officials have de-
scribed him as a respected conservative politician, Jarpa was
prominent in the Chilean Nazi movement in the 1940s and
1950s and was an important figure in the 1973 coup. The
government's negotiating position, known as the Jarpa
plan, called on the opposition to accept Pinochet's 1980
"authoritarian-democratic" Constitution (which outlaws
parties on the left, among other things). As a sweetener, the
government offered to move up congressional elections
from 1989 to 1987, but Jarpa refused to discuss Pinochet's
leaving office before his term expires in 1989—much less the
opposition's demand that he resign immediately. In mid-
October, the A.D. walked out in disgust.

While the dialogue benefited Pinochet, it highlighted dif-
ferences between the opposition movement's two strongest
and best-organized parties, the Christian Democrats
and the Communists. The agenda for the transition to de-
mocracy was not at issue: all the opposition groups call for
Pinochet's resignation as well as for early elections, trade
union rights, a new constitution guaranteeing pluralism, an
end to forced exile and the repudiation of the regime's re-
cent agreements with the International Monetary Fund and
other foreign lenders.

Neither the Christian Democrats nor the Communists
should be underestimated. As would be expected, the Chris-
tian Democrats are strong in business circles and among the
middle class, but the party also has a base of support
among trade unionists and students and in the Catholic
Church. The Communists, who have survived ten years of
intense repression, are also strong among labor and youth
and have established the strongest party presence in the
poblaciones and the slums. Other political forces on the left
and right clearly exercise influence as well, but those two
parties are the magnetic poles around which the others have
defined their priorities.

The emergence of the Democratic Alliance in May made
the Christian Democrats the leaders of a coalition of
"democratic rightists," social democrats and a faction of
the fragmented Socialist Party. The Communists were not
invited to join, but they gave tacit support. The Social-
ist Convergence, a cluster of intellectually influential
Christian-Marxist parties, was invited to join but chose to
remain independent. Although groups on the Marxist left
criticized the exclusion of the Communists, they supported
the protests called by the A.D. for July 12 and August 11.

The dialogue shattered that consensus, however. The
Communist Party denounced the talks as a farce. Along with
the rest of the opposition, it had supported the protest called
by the A.D. for September 8, but then, with Socialist allies,
it initiated further protests on subsequent days. In the third
week of September, in a single action, 20,000 homeless peo-
ple set up a squatter community in vacant lots on the out-
skirts of Santiago. It is common knowledge that this *toma*
was Communist- and Socialist-led.

Capitalizing on the momentum from those protests, on
September 21 the Communists joined with the largest fac-
tion of Socialists and a dozen social and *población*-based
action groups to form the Democratic Popular Movemen
(M.D.P.). When the protests planned for October 11 wer
banned by the regime, the A.D. complied but pro-M.D.
groups went ahead, calling a demonstration in Santia
which drew nearly 100,000 people. The rally was backed
a number of center-right businessmen, and protesters
cluded many Christian Democrats.

The emergence of a leftist opposition front has put
Christian Democrats and their democratic-rightist allies

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touchy position. If the A.D. ignores the M.D.P., there can be no stable transition to democracy. If the groups cooperate, the opposition can perhaps gain strength to tie up the nation in general strikes. There is already a base for common action in the labor movement, where Communists, Socialists and Christian Democrats have been cooperating for the past five years. The success of labor-led protests on October 27 showed the potential of such cooperation.

The A.D. is also under pressure from the right, which argues that close association with leftist friends would alienate Chile's business elite and, more crucially, the military, which still holds the decisive cards. The Jarpa plan's strategy was intended to play on those fears and divide the opposition.

Predictably, the Reagan Administration prefers the Jarpa scenario to a left-center alliance. Representatives of the opposition who have had contact with the State Department speak of its warm interest in the plan. Testifying before a joint hearing of the House Subcommittees on Human Rights and Western Hemisphere Affairs, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs James Michel praised the dialogue as "perhaps the most promising political event" in recent years, and stressed "the need for moderate leaders on all sides [*sic*] to avoid confrontation."

Now, with the dialogue broken off, the Administration is nervous; in early November, Edward J. Derwinski, an adviser to Secretary of State George Shultz, was dispatched to antiago to urge the regime and the A.D. to revive their lks. Given the close relations between the Administration d the Chilean military, he was politely received by those both sides, but well-placed observers in Chile got the im- ession that Pinochet was not interested.

ndeed, as of a month ago, conciliation by either side was longer in style. The regime announced that no more lists mnestied exiles would be published. It also declared that icipants in illegal protests would be deported or impris- —a restoration of the worst features of the state of emer- . Nine people were killed by security forces in the Octo- rotests. As for the opposition, it has again closed ranks. Lucia Pinochet, the President's wife, challenged it to ntiago's O'Higgins Park, the A.D. and the left t that. At least 500,000 people—one-sixth the pop- of Santiago and more than five times the previous rowd—gathered in the park for the November National Protest. It will be hard to put *that* lion sleep. □

IE ROSENBERG DEBATE TAPES

storic debate, "Were the Rosenbergs Framed?" ed by *The Nation* and *The New Republic* at Town October 20, can now be purchased in typed tran- d/or cassette tape form. Complete transcripts are for $24 each; tape cassettes are $19 each. Spe- unts are available on orders of five or more. Send money order payable to *The Nation* to: "Rosen- *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY ou'd like more information, call Mr. Monaco at 8400.

PINK-COL

Break 'The I

RUTH MILKM

The office ployees Int 925, scored when the third largest insura it as the bargaining firm's Syracuse offic through illustrates a women workers in the proach which draws both union traditions. "The ent this," says Regina Canuso, izer. "They see it as a preced at any other major insurance vance in Syracuse did not come trict 925 still faces a stiff battle in an ap-

"The Equitable," as the compan the image of an enlightened, socially tion. "Coming Right With People" is i The firm promotes itself as a particular friend of the women's movement and has given money to the Ms. Foundation and other feminist groups. Last year, Coy Eklund, then chairman of Equitable, even received the magazine's "*Ms.* Hero" award.

But behind the company's pro-feminist facade is another world, a pink-collar ghetto where women perform boring, highly regimented tasks for low wages and with little opportunity for advancement. The women in Equitable's office in Syracuse work all day at video display terminals (V.D.T.s) under sweatshop conditions, marked by speedups, piecework and a factorylike atmosphere. The average wage is $11,000 a year. When some of them began to organize two years ago, it became apparent that Equitable's supposed commitment to women's rights was window dressing.

In the spring of 1981, a claims processor there saw a segment of *60 Minutes* about a new union for clerical workers and decided to contact it for help. The union was District 925, formed in 1981 by the S.E.I.U. and 9 to 5, the Cleveland-based organization for women workers. The women-led union is unique in the American labor movement. It has a young organizing staff whose outlook is as much a product of feminism as of the labor movement. Recognizing that typically powerless female clerical workers have a different sense of themselves than the male blue-collar workers who have historically been the backbone of American unions, District 925 has developed novel organiz-

Ruth Milkman teaches sociology at Queens College.

LAR UNIONS

through at Equitable'

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workers' division of the Service Employees International Union (S.E.I.U.), District 925, scored an important victory in September when the Equitable Life Assurance Society, the third largest insurance company in the country, recognized it as the bargaining agent for 1,200 claims processors at the firm's Syracuse office. The union's breakthrough illustrates a new approach to organizing women workers in the eighty union's break- which draws both on feminist and labor union traditions. "The entire organizing drive was run by women," says Regina Canuso, the union's chief organizer. "They see it as a precedent-setting victory for Clerical workers had never before been able to win an election at any other major insurance company. Their victory in Syracuse did not come easily. District 925 still faces a stiff battle in negotiating a contract.

"The Equitable," as the company likes to call itself, has cultivated the image of an enlightened, socially responsible corporation. "Coming Right With People" is its advertising slogan. The firm promotes itself as a particular friend of the women's movement and has given money to the Ms. Foundation and other feminist groups. Last year, Coy Eklund, then chairman of Equitable, even received the magazine's "*Ms.* Hero" award.

But behind the company's pro-feminist facade is another world, a pink-collar ghetto where women perform boring, highly regimented tasks for low wages and with little opportunity for advancement. The women in Equitable's office in Syracuse work all day at video display terminals (V.D.T.s) under sweatshop conditions, marked by speedups, piecework and a factorylike atmosphere. The average wage is $11,000 a year. When some of them began to organize two years ago, it became apparent that Equitable's supposed commitment to women's rights was window dressing.

In the spring of 1981, a claims processor there saw a segment of *60 Minutes* about a new union for clerical workers and decided to contact it for help. The union was District 925, formed in 1981 by the S.E.I.U. and 9 to 5, the Cleveland-based organization for women workers. The women-led union is unique in the American labor movement. It has a young organizing staff whose outlook is as much a product of feminism as of the labor movement. Recognizing that typically powerless female clerical workers have a different sense of themselves than the male blue-collar workers who have historically been the backbone of American unions, District 925 has developed novel organiz-

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ing techniques. "We strive for an image of unionism which is strong and yet nonthreatening to women workers' self-image," explains Regina Canuso. "We do a lot of consciousness-raising to challenge the feeling so many clerical workers have that nothing can be changed in the office."

District 925 organizers knew that Equitable would be a formidable opponent, so they began their unionization campaign cautiously. For six months, union representatives trained members of a small rank-and-file committee, who formed the core of the organizing drive. One day, when most of the supervisors were out of the office at a manager's wedding, the committee circulated union authorization cards. Within a few days, 70 percent of the workers had signed them. The unionization effort came as a complete surprise to management, which first learned of it through a formal letter from District 925.

Equitable immediately hired one of the leading union-busting consultants in the country, Ray Mickus, a founder of Modern Management Methods Inc., to coordinate its antiunion campaign. Organizers had warned the workers that this would happen, and were prepared for a counter-attack. The union's election campaign strategy was largely devoted to unmasking Mickus's techniques. The organizing committee obtained copies of leaflets he had used in other unionbusting campaigns, and told the workers exactly what to expect. Despite Mickus's efforts, District 925 won the election by a vote of 49 to 40 in February 1982. That victory was a historic breakthrough. Only about 3 percent of the approximately 1 million women insurance workers in the United States are unionized—an extraordinarily low percentage even in a country where 85 percent of all women workers are unorganized.

The success of the Syracuse effort shows the improved prospects for clerical unionization. The highly personal character of office relations that helped blunt pro-union sentiment among clerical workers in the past is being undermined as new technology transforms working conditions and paternalistic relationships in the office. As a result of automation the "office wife," who got the boss coffee and picked out presents for his wife—and who could go home early once in a while in exchange—is rapidly disappearing, replaced by the clerical proletarian. The unionization drive at Equitable followed a period in which working conditions deteriorated, as the office abandoned paper files and traditional procedures and switched to a highly computerized system with the ubiquitous V.D.T.s.

At the same time, a new generation of women, whose job expectations have been raised by the feminist movement, has joined the work force. Most of those who spearheaded the union drive at Equitable are in their 20s and 30s, and many have a few years of college; the workers most reluctant to get involved in the union are the older women. In industries like insurance and banking, management recognized well in advance the threat posed by deteriorating working conditions and the changed consciousness of the labor force. "Your Clerical Workers Are Ripe for Unionism," warned the *Harvard Business Review* in 1971.

Equitable, despite all its progressive P.R., isn't giving in graciously. For twenty months after the election, management refused to negotiate. The company filed a series of challenges to the National Labor Relations Board's certification of the election—all of which were dismissed—and this spring it announced that it might close its Syracuse office, ostensibly as part of a general corporate reorganization. In gaining recognition, District 925 won the latest round of the fight, but the outcome remains in doubt. One of the issues on the table in the contract talks which began last month is the company's proposed shutdown of the office. Even if that threat is withdrawn, negotiations will be anything but easy.

Last winter, confronted by Equitable's refusal to discuss a contract, District 925 called on other unions to boycott the company; the A.F.L.-C.I.O. endorsed the move in February. Although Equitable handles more than $1 billion worth of union pension funds, company officials have denied that the boycott has had any financial impact. But Meredith Miller of District 925's Washington, D.C., office reports that several unions have shifted their health and welfare plans from Equitable. In May, for example, Local 250-A of the Transport Workers Union joined the boycott and transferred its $1 million life insurance and dental plan to another carrier. Miller says that Equitable has lost new business from several unions in recent months and that the boycott's effectiveness was a crucial factor in the company's decision to recognize the union.

District 925 has also called on women's organizations to honor the boycott. Those groups don't have the economic clout that unions have, but they can exert moral pressure on Equitable because of the firm's public posture as a friend of women's rights. Several organizations, most important the

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National Organization for Women, which voted to endorse the boycott at its annual convention in early October, have offered support. Sadly, appeals from the union didn't stop *Ms.* from hosting a party for astronaut Sally Ride at Equitable's posh Manhattan headquarters this summer. The space was donated for the occasion, in yet another tax-deductible expression of The Equitable's much-touted commitment to women's rights. Unionists formed an informational picket line outside the building, and Bella Abzug, one of the few invited guests who chose not to go in, sent a message to hostess Gloria Steinem saying, "This is an outrageous act and I am rebelling." (Steinem's book *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* had just been published.)

At every opportunity, District 925 and its supporters have sought to put Equitable in embarrassing situations, particularly in the Syracuse area. Karen DeCrow, a former president of NOW who lives in Syracuse, frequently makes statements in behalf of the union. In September, at a press conference he held with the mayor and local S.E.I.U. officials, Senator Daniel P. Moynihan praised the union and promised to use his influence to encourage Equitable to keep the office open. And just two days before Equitable announced its recognition of the union, the Syracuse City Council unanimously adopted a resolution vowing to make every effort to keep the company in the city. District 925 has held public demonstrations in front of Equitable offices around the country. The union plans to continue the boycott until it wins a guarantee that the office will stay open and a contract settlement that its members accept.

District 925's work on behalf of the women in the Syracuse office has been exemplary. It vindicates feminists in the labor movement who have long argued that unions' presumption that "women workers are hard to organize" is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Yet even if Equitable does not carry out its threat to close the office and agrees to a contract, the net result will be a tiny island of unionism in a vast ocean of unorganized private-sector pink-collar workers. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. is just beginning to recognize that it cannot afford to ignore women workers if unions are to rebuild their rapidly ebbing strength in a drastically restructured economy. Interest in District 925's tactics is growing as other unions seek to utilize the appeal of "women's issues" in organizing campaigns. Recent statistics show that unions have won 59 percent of all representation elections in which women's issues were emphasized, considerably higher than their overall success rate of 43 percent in 1981. Jackie Ruff, District 925's executive director, is optimistic about the prospects for unionizing women in the 1980s. "The 1970s was a time when the ideals of equality began to be applied by women to work situations," she says, "and now we're at a stage where those ideals are being pursued practically. Not everyone is being promoted up the corporate ladder."

In recent years, almost all clerical organizing initiatives have been in the public sector, where major unions like the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Communications Workers of America and the S.E.I.U. are competing fiercely with one another. Management opposition is generally less formidable in government, and because many public employees are already members of associations, the task of unionizing them is considerably easier. But efforts directed at the ranks of women workers in industries like banking and insurance have been rare indeed. Even District 925 has concentrated on the public sector, perhaps because it is under pressure from the S.E.I.U. to bring in more dues-paying members and thus justify its continued operation. The union recognizes the need to organize Equitable's other offices around the country, and it has contacts in about thirty of them. Its limited resources, however, are already stretched thin.

Although insurance is part of the expanding service segment of the economy, the problems that District 925 faces in Syracuse are not all that different from those of unions in basic industries, labor's longtime stronghold. The company's intransigence and its ability—recently enhanced by new technology—to relocate in order to avoid unionization are part of an all too familiar picture. The union's prospects would be brighter if the labor movement were in better shape. But unions everywhere have been losing power, and have become more and more isolated from society. As long as mainstream organized labor remains locked in defensive struggles in dying industries, District 925 seems destined to play a female David to Equitable's Goliath.

District 925 stands out in the labor movement for its dynamic, sophisticated leadership. It has shown that it is not afraid to try unconventional tactics. At Equitable, it has broken new ground. What happens in Syracuse and what kind of support the feminist and labor movements offer Equitable's workers there will affect the future both of those movements and of clerical workers all over the country. □

GOVERNMENT POLYGRAPHS

What if the Lie Detector Lies?

DOROTHY J. SAMUELS

Angered by leaks in his Washington bureaucracy, President Reagan has called in the heavy Orwellian artillery—the so-called lie detector. It all began on March 11, when Reagan issued an executive order requiring government employees with access to classified information—that is, half the Federal work force—to submit to polygraph tests administered in the course of leak investigations. Such routine use of the polygraph by the government threatens to provide a cloak of respectability for a procedure best described as a physiological strip search.

Even before President Reagan issued his directive, the government's use of the polygraph was on the upswing. In 1982, about 23,000 tests were conducted on government em-

Dorothy J. Samuels, an attorney, has written previously for The Nation *on civil liberties issues.*

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ployees, an all-time high. During the past decade, the number of tests on Federal employees has more than tripled, mirroring a comparable rise in private industry.

According to the American Polygraph Association, at least one in four Fortune 500 companies administers the test on a regular basis. It is difficult to verify that claim because many employers refuse to respond to surveys on the subject. But proponents and critics agree that polygraph testing in the workplace has become commonplace. Conservative estimates put the number of job-related polygraph tests administered each year in the private sector at well over a million. The true figure is probably twice as high. A glance at the listings for polygraph operators in the Business Yellow Pages will confirm that "lie detection" is a burgeoning industry. Thus, how the Reagan Administration's planned polygraph explosion fares will be closely watched by both management and workers in industry.

Congress has so far been commendably skeptical about Reagan's polygraph scheme. An amendment to the Defense Department's 1984 authorization bars the department's proposed polygraph regulations from taking effect until April 15 to allow Congress time to scrutinize them more closely. The D.O.D. rules, the first issued pursuant to the President's directive, are particularly pernicious, permitting the systematic use of the polygraph for pre-employment screening and random checks—an unprecedented act for a government department outside the intelligence agencies. A General Accounting Office study reports that about 7,000 Defense Department employees and contractors are currently given polygraph examinations in connection with special assignments. Under the proposed regulations, the number of individuals who could be required to submit to the tests shoots up to approximately 116,000, the number of Defense Department employees with access to "sensitive compartmented information."

The debate on the use of the polygraph, whether by the government or by industry, centers on two issues: validity (how accurate the results of the tests are) and utility (how much the tests aid the employer in the conduct of business).

Polygraph testing is a highly imprecise tool for measuring deception. As Dr. John F. Beary 3d, associate dean of Georgetown University School of Medicine, explained during hearings of the House Legislation and National Security Subcommittee on October 19, "The polygraph—which measures heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate and skin resistance—detects excitement, not lying. Lying is only one of several stimuli which may excite a person. Other stimuli which cause excitement are fear of losing one's job, embarrassment or anger at being examined."

The reliability of the tests depends on a multitude of factors, including the nature of the questions, the circumstances under which the exam is taken and the relative sophistication of the subject and the examiner. The Congressional Office of Technology Assessment reviewed the results of twenty-eight studies on polygraph testing and found reported accuracy rates ranging from 17 percent to 100 percent. In his testimony before the House subcommittee, Dr. John H. Gibbons, director of the O.T.A., noted that most studies to date have focused on criminal investigations. In that area, he stated, "The cumulative research evidence suggests that the polygraph detects deception better than chance, but with significant error rates." There is no scientific evidence, he points out, that polygraph tests would accurately evaluate a large number of people in investigations of unauthorized disclosures, in pre-employment screening or in random checks. Moreover, the tests are most accurate when they are taken voluntarily. Under the Reagan order, government employees will be compelled to take them under threat of dismissal, increasing the likelihood of unreliable results.

Proponents of the polygraph naturally come up with more positive statistics. For example, Deputy Assistant Attorney General Richard K. Willard told Congress that the "overwhelming majority of studies show accuracy rates for polygraph examinations within the range of 70 to 95 percent" and that special techniques to be applied by the Administration will reduce the number of erroneous interpretations. While many people view the Administration's program as an authoritarian dragnet, Willard regards it benignly as "a policy of carefully limited use," reflecting "a reasonable balancing of competing interests."

On the issue of utility, Willard was far more candid than are most private employers in revealing that the test's true potential lies in uncovering damaging information about an employee. Hooked up to the supposedly omniscient machine, subjects frequently "confess" highly personal and embarrassing information in a desperate attempt to be judged truthful. "This phenomenon," Willard concedes, "may actually produce information that is more useful in terms of the purpose of the examination than the examiner's assessment of the subject's physiological responses." Apparently the Administration regards the deeply intrusive and humiliating nature of polygraph testing as a virtue when "national security" is at stake.

Another hidden dividend of a polygraph screening program, Willard said, is that it creates a climate of fear. In polite society, this is known as "the deterrent effect." It might also be termed "the Richard Nixon rationale." On a July 1971 Oval Office tape, the former President was recorded as saying, "I don't know anything about polygraphs and I don't know how accurate they are, but I know they'll scare the hell out of people."

In the end, it boils down to a question of values. Use of the polygraph is one of those privacy issues that cuts across ideological and party lines. Supply-sider Representative Jack Kemp, for example, has been one of the leading opponents of the polygraph, sponsoring legislation that would ban its use for screening job applicants in private industry and government. "Even if the tests were 100 percent accurate," he has stated, "they would still be outrageous, because of the inherent invasion of privacy they mean to the prospective employee." Unfortunately, Kemp has yet to take a visible role in the controversy over Reagan's directive.

If Kemp and other members of Congress want to reverse the trend toward greater use of the polygraph, they must start by permanently blocking the D.O.D. rules issued under Reagan's executive order. □

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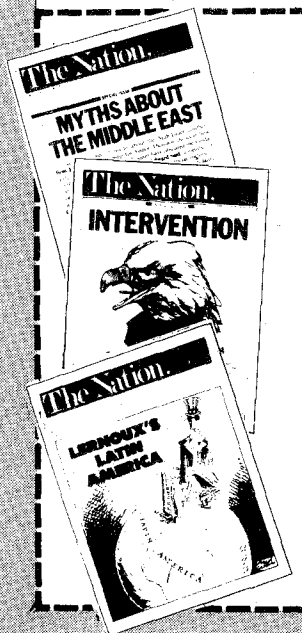

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

PBS'S 'VIETNAM': WAIST-DEEP IN THE BIG MUDDY

A Balance of Error?

PETER BISKIND

Way back in 1974, when Peter Davis's Academy Award-winning documentary on Vietnam, *Hearts and Minds*, hit the screen, mainstream critics attacked it for taking cheap shots at Nixon and the Nixonoids, for tendentious editing, for insulting the intelligence of its viewers. They wanted more "balance."

Here at last is the film they called for, a thirteen-part, $4.6 million, six-years-in-the-making "definitive" examination of the war. (Complementing it are a 700-plus-page history by Stanley Karnow, transcripts, study guides and audio cassettes—a comprehensive educational package designed for home study and classroom use.) *Vietnam: A Television History*, a production of PBS's Boston affiliate, with help from Britain's Central Independent Television and France's Antenne 2, not only looks at the war from the American, South Vietnamese and North Vietnamese perspectives but within these gives us a spectrum of views ranging from policy makers and generals at the top to G.I.s and Vietnamese villagers at the bottom.

The principle of balance even dictates the film's structure and the editing strategy. Antiwar filmmakers of yesteryear made their points by juxtaposing official rhetoric with gruesome reality. In *In the Year of the Pig*, for example, Emile de Antonio cut from Gen. William Westmoreland claiming that prisoners of war were being treated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions to a Vietcong suspect being repeatedly clubbed with the butt of a rifle. *Vietnam* is much more restrained. Shot B more often illustrates shot A than contradicts it. And when B does contradict A, it doesn't mean that we are to question A, merely that reality is sufficiently complex to accommodate many points of view.

Vietnam has received rave notices in the press. Critics know balance when they see it, and they have praised the film for allowing viewers to make up their own minds about the questions it raises. On the face of it, this response seems right. It's not unreasonable to assume that a series released eight years after the war's end might be more informative and judicious than films made in anger at the height of the fighting. But do the multiple perspectives add up to the truth, or do they merely enable the film to hide behind a smokescreen of bogus "fairness," "impartiality," "objectivity"? Are the films really balanced? What are the parameters of the debate? Which participants and what points of view are excluded? And finally, is not the principle of balance itself an ideological artifact, a means by which the political center (which, after all, presided over the war) tries to defuse criticism from the "extremes," the right and the left?

For starters, let's take the centerpiece of the fifth show, the decimation of the village of Thuybo, near Danang, by American Marines in January 1967. British producer Martin Smith stumbled on the story during a visit to Vietnam in 1981. According to an account in *The Times* of London, Smith was told by his hosts that My Lais were a dime a dozen. They took Smith to Thuybo, where he interviewed a number of people who described the slaughter of about a hundred women and children. Smith apparently felt he had a scoop—a bloody massacre of My Lai proportions. But the American producers chose to present it from both sides—as experienced by the G.I.s and the villagers. According to Pvt. Jack Hill and his buddies, the Vietcong in the village opened up with .50-caliber machine guns, pinning down his unit in the rain for a day and a night. After three days without water, food or sleep, the Marines stormed the village. The surviving Vietnamese claimed they shot everything that moved.

"Some of the wounded people went to their beds to lie down," recalls Nguyen Bay. "The soldiers shot their ears. Blood was coming out in pools as they lay there. Then the soldiers shot at their stomachs and their insides splattered all over. Then they smashed people's heads, using the butts of their guns." According to Private Hill, on the other hand, "I know half of the guys in the squad didn't shoot no old ladies and kids." But, he continues, "I can't account for every Marine that was there and what they done at that particular time, because . . . that's what they had to do." As Sgt. Thomas Murphy puts it in the next segment, "An 8-year-old or a 9-year-old can kill you just as quick as a 25- or 26-year-old man." If the Marines did kill the kids, maybe they were right. Hill sums it up: "It's just normal procedure. . . . It was war."

Was it a massacre or not? We'll never know from this film, because it tries so hard not to take sides. The result? Leftists will hear the Vietnamese and conclude there was a massacre. Rightists will hear the G.I.s and conclude there wasn't, or if there was, it was justified by the circumstances of war. Centrists will hear both and conclude that since there was justice on both sides, it was a tragedy for which no one was ultimately responsible. As Karnow put it in an interview included in the press kit that accompanies his book, "Whatever you think of the war, whether it was right or wrong, you have to conclude that it was a terrible tragedy."

But the film's refusal to declare itself is suspect, to say the least. What, after all, constitutes balance? The numerical distribution of points of view, the placement of shots? It certainly can't be the former, because of the twenty-one statements we hear on Thuybo, sixteen are from the Marines and only five from the Vietnamese. Moreover, the Marines' stories frame the sequence, subtly tilting it toward their point of view.

The questions raised by this episode permeate all the films and seriously limit their usefulness. The best installments are the initial two, which deal with the French occupation of Indochina; first, because they contain rare footage and second, because they adopt a forthright anticolonial position. According to the narrator, the French simply "seized the areas near Saigon" in 1860 and established a "colony." There is no question that the French influence was malign. "Vietnamese society was reeling under the impact of Westernization," continues the narrator, who

Peter Biskind is the author of the recently published Seeing Is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties *(Pantheon).*

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goes on to emphasize French "colonial repression." He accuses the French of "trying to transform Vietnam into a source of profit." "Cheap labor" enabled companies like Michelin Rubber to make "millions in profits from factories and plantations."

Vietnam's narrator suggests that the French collaborated with the Japanese in World War II, and says that in the nineteenth century they "staged public executions. The severed heads were photographed and printed on postcards which soldiers sent home to sweethearts in Paris 'with kisses from Hanoi.'" The film mocks a French newsreel that speaks of France bringing "peace, work, prosperity and joy" to "regions of hostility and misery."

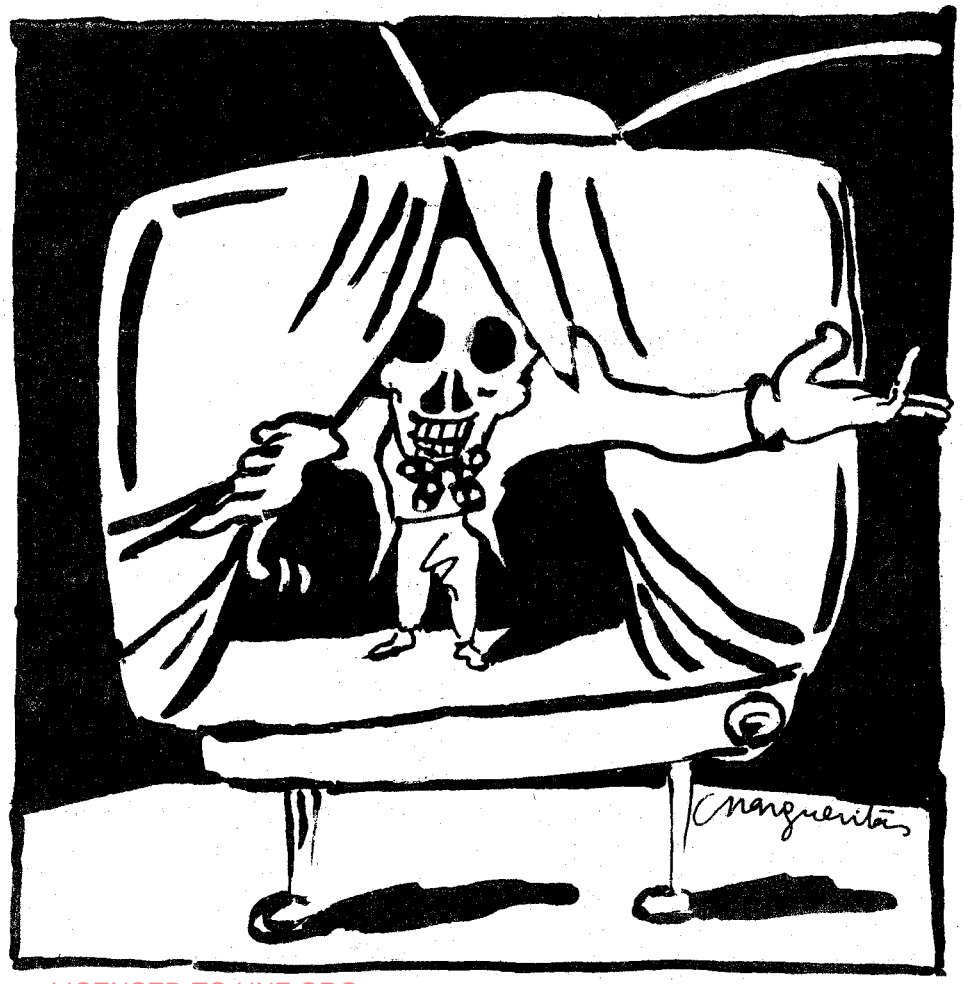
Finally, in one of the few truly shocking moments in the thirteen long hours, we are presented with the spectacle of a French survivor of Dien Bien Phu describing how he was hit with a shell and woke up under the knife of a North Vietnamese surgeon, who was presumably saving his life. "You are badly wounded and we will take care of you," he recalls the surgeon saying. "From that moment," continues the officer, "I knew I had left the Greek, Latin, Judeo-Christian world to pass into the world of the Red termites."

Thus the French—brutal, arrogant and stupid—are allowed to convict themselves before the unforgiving gaze of the camera. There appears to be only one side to the story of French colonialism. Were viewers to watch only the first two segments of the series, they might be excused for accusing the producers of bias, simplification, even vulgar Marxism.

But when we get to America's Indochina war, it's a different story. Exit colonialism; enter anti-Communism. Whereas the former was incontrovertibly bad news, the latter was, well, reasonable. After all, Moscow had "dropped the Iron Curtain . . . on Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria," as a Paramount newsreel tells us (French newsreels are objects of fun; American newsreels provide information), the North Koreans had invaded the South and American G.I.s had fought the yellow hordes of China to a standstill. While the Vietnamese struggle had its own unique history, the film argues that the United States nevertheless could hardly be blamed for seeing the world in terms of falling dominoes.

Whereas the narrator referred to Ho Chi Minh and his followers as "rebels," "nationalists," or "the Vietnamese resistance" while they were fighting the French, once the Americans arrive they are invariably "Communists." Whereas Bao Dai is the "playboy emperor picked by the French," Nguyen Cao Ky and Nguyen Van Thieu are the "government." Whereas French troops just released from Japanese prison camps go "on a rampage, arresting and attacking Vietnamese," American troops engage in the was-it-or-wasn't-it massacre at Thuybo. Americans, in both the military and the government, come off rather well. In *In The Year of the Pig*, there is a remarkable sequence in which the interviewer asks some big, healthy G.I.s how they like the beach they're cavorting on. "No American girls," they answer. "There are girls down there at the other end of the beach," says the interviewer, hopefully. "They're gooks. . . . slants . . . they're no good," the G.I.s reply. In *Vietnam* there is nothing to suggest the depth of the racism that infected America's attitude toward the Vietnamese. There is no Westmoreland saying, "The Oriental doesn't put the same high price on life as does a Westerner," as he does in *Hearts and Minds*; no Curtis Lemay threatening to "bomb Vietnam back to the Stone Age," as he does in *In the Year of the Pig*; no George Patton 3d praising his soldiers as "a bloody good bunch of killers," as he does in both *Pig* and *Hearts and Minds*. On the contrary, in *Vietnam*, Westmoreland, Rusk, Rostow and the others are all thoughtful, caring men caught up in circumstances beyond their control. William Colby is given all the time in the world to refute charges that the C.I.A.'s Phoenix Program, which he ran, was no more than an assassination campaign against suspected V.C. cadre, but only a few moments are available for rebuttal. Even Ky looks good. You'd never know from this film that he was an admirer of Hitler.

Why the difference between the film's treatment of the Americans and the French? Were the Americans better than the French? Was their war more just? Their bombs less lethal, their bayonets less sharp? Were the Vietnamese more deserving of death in 1964 or 1974 than they were in 1954? Surely not, and therefore it is hard to resist the conclusion that the producers, being American themselves, making the film in America for Americans, largely with American money, simply made the ex-



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pedient judgment that if the American war was not more just, at least it was more "complex." Outrage is out; compassion is in. We're all a lot more mature now than we were ten years ago.

Not that the film pulls any punches as far as the prosecution of the war is concerned. It reruns the all-too-familiar footage of G.I.s torching "hooches," planes blanketing acres of forest with Agent Orange; it presents napalming, torture, disfigurement and ten different ways of dying. But the discrepancy between the enormity of the actions and the banality of the actors merely dramatizes the question the film never satisfactorily answers: Why did it happen?

Vietnam can't answer that question because it limits the debate over the war to "responsible" critics. With few exceptions, the film's treatment of domestic dissent is confined to those within the government. Hawks like Rostow and Rusk are disputed by doves like Ball, Clifford and McPherson, and occasionally by senators like Wayne Morse. Despite its palpable and dramatic inhibiting effect on the war effort, the peace movement is confined to a single installment, and to only part of one at that. The filmmakers appear to be so frightened of being accused of bias that much of the "Homefront USA" segment is bizarrely given over to pro-war demonstrators, even though they were insignificant until late in the game. Within the antiwar movement, the film clearly favors the McCarthy moderates, who stayed safely within the political system, over the radicals and long-hairs, who stepped outside it and took to the streets. (The treatment of the riots outside the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, which basically follows Mayor Daley's line about police provocation, is a scandal.) It even attempts to discredit draft resisters with a snide aside from James Fallows, who claims they looked for "the painless way out."

Astoundingly, the phrase "American imperialism" is never once uttered in the course of the entire thirteen segments, except by the North Vietnamese. Where are the antiwar critics outside the government who could have challenged the cold war prattle of the foreign policy elite? Where are Noam Chomsky, I.F. Stone, Daniel Ellsberg? In their absence, Henry Kissinger becomes the only American authority on his own negotiations with Le Duc Tho!

This is not to say that the series contains nothing of merit. It has more than its share of moments. There is the remarkable admission by the C.I.A.'s Ray Cline that the second Gulf of Tonkin incident (the "attack" on the Turner Joy which occasioned the first American bombing of the North) in all probability never happened. "Many of the reports which seemed to relate to the second incident were proved either to be unsound or to relate to the first incident," says Cline blandly, adding, "Quite often the commanding officers—in this case the President of the United States—don't wait for the details to be settled if they feel they are in a critical situation with a danger of military conflict." Then there is Former Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Roger Hilsman, excusing the Kennedy Administration's complicity in Diem's assassination by arguing, in effect, that Diem deserved what he got because he refused to follow American

OLD DOG

1.

Cocker. English. Fifteen years old. Tumor
Of testes. Vet promising nothing. So did it.

Inevitable, but inevitable, too, the
Recollection of the first time, long back,
Seen—puppy-whirl
Of flopping forepaws, flopping ears oversize, stub
Tail awag, eyes bright. And brighter yet,
Dancing in joy-light, the eyes
Of a little girl with her new love. Holding
It up to show. That was what my eyes, open in darkness,
Had now just seen.

And what, no doubt, the eyes now closed beside me
Had, too, been seeing in darkness. With no confirmation needed
To pass between. And now
That breath beside me was at last
Even in sleep. I thought of the possible time
When evenness—in what ears?—
Might be of silence
Only.

Fingering familiar dark, I made
My way out.

2.

Boots on, pull-over over
Night shirt, on shoulders camp blanket,
Barberry-ripped—whatever
Came handy in ante-room. Then,
I was standing in starlight, moon
Long since behind the mountain, mountain blackness at my back.
On mossed stone sitting, I, streamward,
Stare, intent
On the stream's now messageless murmur of motion.

The stars are high-hung, clearly
Defined in night's cloudlessness,
But here, below, identity blurred
In the earth-bound waver of water.

Upward again I look. See Jupiter, contemptuous,
Noble, firmly defined,
The month being June, the place Vermont.

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advice. Given America's notorious historical amnesia and the grave situation in Latin America today, it can't hurt to be reminded of our recent history in Vietnam, nor to hear what the Vietnamese have to say. As the series reminds us, Vietnam was the first television war, and if Reagan's news blackout of the Grenada invasion is any indication, it may be the last.

But if the film's stated goal is to answer the question asked by the narrator in the first segment—"Vietnam. A noble cause? A shameful venture?"—*Vietnam* is a failure. There is no debate, just the presentation of mutually exclusive points of view, as though the war could be boiled down to a failure of communication, the "tragedy" of Vietnam. The truth is that the war was a crime, not a tragedy. The tragedy is that this film lacks the conviction to say so.

By trying to be all things to all people, *Vietnam* not only fails to educate its audience, it fails to fulfill its covert goal, which is to strengthen the center against the left and right. Ironically, the film confirms the right in its view that the United States should have nuked Hanoi when it had the chance in 1954; it confirms the left in its view that America is an amoral imperial power. We have come full circle.

Stanley Karnow's lengthy and inconclusive *Vietnam: A History* (Viking, 750 pp., $20) is a perfect complement to the series. Karnow was a *Time* correspondent in Paris during the 1950s and went to Southeast Asia for *Time* and *Life* in 1959—not, one would have thought, particularly good training for a book such as this one, given Henry Luce's notoriously unhappy influence on American policy in Asia. Luce's heavy hand is evident in the first paragraph of the book, in which Karnow writes, "With the young men who died in Vietnam died the dream of an 'American century.' "

Vietnam: A History contains a great many facts, little analysis and much waffling. For a political correspondent, Karnow has a surprisingly rudimentary grasp of politics. He piously describes the war as one "which nobody won—a struggle between victims." Tell it to the Vietnamese. "My general attitude, to the extent that I can sum it up succinctly," he writes, "has been one of humility in the face of a vast and complicated subject." Had Karnow demonstrated a little less humility and considerably more intelligence, he might have given us a real contribution to the literature on Vietnam instead of the oversized paperweight he produced. □

3.

I shut eyes and see what
I had not in actuality seen—the
Raw earth, red clay streaked with
Blackness of humus under
The tall pine, anonymous in
The vet's woodlot.

Will I ever go back there? Absurdly,
I think I might go and put, stuck in the clay,
A stone—any stone large enough. No word, just something
To make a change, however minute,
In the structure of the universe.

4.

I think of Pharaoh's
Unblinking gaze across the
Endless sand.

If we can think of timelessness, does it exist?

5.

Now Jupiter, southwest, beyond the sagging black spur
Of the mountain, in the implacable
Mathematics of a planet,
Has set. Tell me,
Is there a garden where
The petal, dew-kissed, withereth not?
And where, in darkness, beyond what bramble and flint,
Would iron gate, on iron hinge, move without sound?

Far off, a little girl, little no longer, would,
If yet she knew,
Lie in her bed and weep
For what life is.

6.

Who will be the last to remember tonight?

Perhaps, far off, an old woman,
Who once was a child,
Now alone, waking before dawn to fumble for
Something she painfully knows but cannot lay hand to, in
The unlabeled detritus and trash of Time.

Robert Penn Warren

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John Updike in
The New Yorker:

THE ANATOMY LESSON IS A FEROCIOUS, HEARTFELT BOOK. Materials one might have thought exhausted by Roth's previous novelistic explorations, inflammations one might have thought long soothed burn hotter than ever; the central howl unrolls with a meditated savagery both fascinating and repellent, self-indulgent yet somehow sterling, adamant, pure in the style of high modernism, that bewitchment to all the art-stricken young of the fifties.

A text so self-aware and self-referential suggests the torture machine of Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*, which inscribed, over and over, an unintelligible lesson upon the victim's skin. As well as tireless superscription a constant flanking motion seems in progress; the repeated self-indictments leave the critic little to say. One can scarcely complain of the novel's frenzied solipsism when frenzied solipsism is its chosen and announced topic . . . *The Anatomy Lesson* revolves around the paradox of incarnation—the astonishing coexistence in one life of infantilism and intelligence, of selfishness and altruism, of sexual appetite and social conscience . . . Roth's message, driven home in book after book, is what infants men are . . . Roth has been preeminently a celebrant of a son's world. Who else has given us so many vivid, comical, ironically seen, but above all lovingly preserved mothers and fathers in fiction? Or has so faithfully kept fresh as moral referent the sensations of childhood? . . .

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Irish Outrage

BERNARD McCABE

THE STORIES OF WILLIAM TREVOR. *Penguin. 799 pp. $8.95.*

FOOLS OF FORTUNE. *By William Trevor. Viking. 239 pp. $13.95.*

William Trevor is a wonderfully skilled storyteller, with a sharp eye for physical detail and a sharp ear for patterns of speech. He can encapsulate a character with miraculous speed, his invention seems inexhaustible and he offers an almost Dickensian range of faces and voices. He is also prolific. *Fools of Fortune* is his ninth novel to appear in the last twenty years; many of his plays have appeared on stage and television; *The Stories of William Trevor* brings together no fewer than sixty of his published short stories.

Trevor, unlike John McGahern, Edna O'Brien, Benedict Kiely, Bernard MacLaverty and Brian Friel, comes from the other side of the Irish fence, the Protestant side, or at least a corner of it—the world of Anglo-Irish gentlefolk who live in the Big House, or know the people there, who educate their sons in English or Anglo-Irish public schools and at Oxbridge or Trinity College, Dublin. It is a world that is almost gone. Like Elizabeth Bowen before him, Trevor moved to England long ago, and now lives there permanently. But he writes with fluent ease and apparently equal sympathy about both countries, both religions and all classes—especially well about the odd minglings that occur between them.

His topics are familiar enough. He deals with ordinary, domestic emotions, though with a heavy emphasis on the darker feelings, especially the deceptions and self-deceptions lurking in human relationships. Love is undermined by anxiety or fear. Sudden death comes to happy, stable families. Sudden disastrous unmaskings and revelations occur in unhappy, unstable families. There is a lot of loneliness, a lot of sexual inadequacy and sexual dishonesty. He is especially expert at evoking casual malignity, effectively dramatizing human evil without resorting to any of William Golding's elaborate mumbo jumbo. Trevor stays with the real. His careful observation of people and places—a bleak pub in bleakest South London, a hotel in the dreariest of small Irish market towns or the flabby luxury of the London middle class, "the fallen," as he calls them in one story—makes Trevor an old-fashioned realist.

The stories, though, are also full of fantasy. But it is the fantasy of real people behaving in the fantastic way that real people do. So the darkest tales tend to have a comic underlining. What begins as comedy will suddenly draw us up short, close to tragedy. "The Penthouse Apartment," a knockabout farce with a drunken Irish janitor, an innocent *au pair* girl and a nervous spinster together wreaking minor havoc on a vulgarly expensive flat in London, suddenly changes key. We find we are really reading about how a lonely old woman's peace of mind is being irrevocably destroyed. The outrageous janitor, the man responsible for this destruction, is, with his effortless lies and anarchic resourcefulness, a favorite Trevor type, a comic rogue who battens on and arbitrarily destroys vulnerable people. Such figures turn up in many stories and in several novels, in *The Love Department* and *Other People's Worlds*, for example, and, in a sinister, psychopathic form, in *The Children of Dynmouth*.

A crueller version of "The Penthouse Apartment" comes in a later story, "Broken Homes," in which a doctrinaire social worker arranges group therapy for a gang of teen-agers by having them redecorate the apartment of a lonely old woman. She is defenseless before them as, drunk and drugged, they savagely destroy her modest possessions and her way of life.

For Trevor, real life is full of such fantastic black humor. In "A Complicated Nature," a withdrawn bachelor is persuaded by a married woman from the apartment upstairs to help her reclothe the naked body of her afternoon lover, who has apparently died in action. "In at the Birth" presents a childless couple who keep an aging man in their upstairs nursery, fully equipped with playpen, outsize cradle, even a baby-sitter. When he dies they find another "baby." In "The Hotel of the

Bernard McCabe is in the English department at Tufts University. His articles have appeared in Commonweal, Commentary, Saturday Review *and many other magazines.*

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Idle Moon," a predatory pair simply moves in and takes over an old couple's quiet home. In each case, the victim's inherent vulnerability is caught and exposed.

Not all of these stories come off. Trevor's odd, arresting sense of humor insists on those absurd specificities of human intercourse that interfere with potentially solemn or tragic moments. At his best he can convey a deep sense of the pathos of ordinary lives, yet the insistent high jinks in some stories tend to obscure or defuse compassion. One is then aware of a very cold artist's eye. But Trevor can achieve the utmost delicacy of both irony and feeling: in "Another Christmas," about the breakdown of an old friendship stemming from a "wrong" political remark; in "Being Stolen From," about a lonely middle-aged Irishwoman in London being pressured to return her small adopted child to its natural mother; and especially in "Teresa's Wedding," a truly Chekhovian picture of a pregnant girl's forced marriage in an Irish small town. Each of these stories, by the way, is told largely from the woman's point of view. That kind of understanding self-projection is one of Trevor's great strengths. It shows itself most convincingly in his fine novel *Elizabeth Alone*.

In his most recent stories Trevor seeks to extend his range beyond the small parochialisms of the heart. Strainings and awkwardnesses result. "The Bedroom Eyes of Mrs. Vansittart," for example, a rather silly and nasty story about sexual blackmail with a fancy new locale, Cap Ferrat, is a pointless parody of Somerset Maugham. Much more interesting are "Beyond the Pale" and the trilogy "Matilda's England." In "Beyond the Pale" Trevor confronts contemporary Anglo-Irish politics for the first time head-on. Four English bridge-playing old friends find that their annual visit to an idyllically serene, English-run hotel in a quiet corner of Northern Ireland is shattered by the sudden intrusion of political violence—a suicide following a vengeful murder. Three of the four, ruthlessly self-indulgent, treat the affair as a minor inconvenience, but the fourth, one of Trevor's recurrent half-crazed wise women, delivers a hysterical sermonette comprising a thumbnail history of Ireland's long oppression by England and a denunciation of their own corrupt lives and sleazy sexual practices. Clearly Trevor wants to link, in intensifying ways, the moral and psychological

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violence that this group visits upon itself to the larger horrors of Irish-English politics, where comparable malignities and victimizations prevail. But the revelation scene has too much work to do and seems stiff and strained.

There's a larger objection. Trevor is properly repelled by the cold-hearted violence that political dissension can produce, and is wonderfully good at depicting its immediate human impact. But that is all he does; the heart of the story remains the private misery of private violence. If you step into the complex world where private and public acts intermingle (Conrad's world, Malraux's, sometimes Graham Greene's), decent outrage at atrocities is fair enough but does not go far enough. Trevor's kind of simplicity mars another recent Irish book, Benedict Kiely's otherwise brilliant novella, *Proxopera*, in which we are pressed to contemplate and be repelled by terrorism in the North but are never pushed beyond the immediate ugliness of the act. By comparison, Bernard MacLaverty's *Cal* is an unpretentious, honest account of the dilemmas of violent political involvement, as, on a more sophisticated level, is Brian Friel's remarkable play, *Translations*.

The three short stories that make up "Matilda's England" are about the impact of other English wars. Matilda has grown up on a farm on an estate in southern England. As a child she is made to suffer vicariously the trauma visited on a woman whose idyllic life in the estate's manor house has been shattered by World War I. Matilda's own happy childhood is similarly destroyed by the deaths of her beloved father and brother in World War II. She conjoins the two disasters in her tormented mind and works a crazy vengeance on the new rich family that has taken over the estate. She ends up living there herself, alone in the collapsing house: in her madness she is avenging herself on history, too, by denying it. This strange story is closely followed by "Attracta," a horrifyingly graphic tale of I.R.A. vengeance against the English in Northern Ireland. Vengeance is Trevor's obsession.

Fools of Fortune addresses Ireland's political violence at full length. Like "Matilda's England," it is about a child's vulnerability, about an idyllic world destroyed and, more insistently than ever, about revenge. In 1918, 8-year-old Willie Quinton lives in Kilneagh, a big house in County Cork.

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His father is an Irish Protestant mill owner, his mother an elegant Englishwoman. Distant cousins live at Woodcombe, a "stately home" in Southern England. The ordered way of life at Kilneagh is richly evoked: custom and ceremony, innocence and beauty. Willie loves his parents, his two charming sisters, his eccentric great-aunts and especially Father Kilgarriff, a gentle expriest whose lessons on Ireland's turbulent history preach nonviolence. Life for Willie moves quietly and happily.

Then disaster strikes. The Quintons, although Protestant, have supported Irish nationalism for generations, and Willie's father befriends Michael Collins, the Sinn Fein leader in the Anglo-Irish war just getting under way. Then one of his millworkers, thought to be an informer, is found hanged, with his tongue cut out. In reprisal for this grisly act of vengeance, the Black and Tans (British mercenaries notorious for their atrocities) burn down Kilneagh. Willie's father dies trying vainly to save his two young daughters from the flames. A whole way of life is suddenly destroyed; Willie and his mother survive to live in frowsty lodgings in Cork City, and Mrs. Quinton, overcome by these events, becomes an alcoholic. Willie grows up warily and miserably.

Marianne, a distant cousin from the English Woodcombe connection, comes to visit and the two young people fall awkwardly in love. For one night they sleep together in the surviving wing of burnt-out Kilneagh. Willie returns to Cork to find that his mother has cut her wrists and died. He disappears. Marianne returns to Kilneagh pregnant, and stays on there with her baby, Imelda. Then we learn that the absent Willie has sought out the Englishman responsible for destroying his family, has worked *his* revenge by savagely stabbing him to death and has fled to Italy where he will spend most of a lifetime in exile.

The novel concludes with Willie in old age coming quietly back to Kilneagh to end his days with Marianne. A final twist: their sensitive daughter Imelda accidently learns in childhood the history of her family, her grandfather's terrible death, her grandmother's suicide, her father's murderous revenge. This knowledge drives her insane. Now middle-aged, she, like Matilda, has become a sort of holy fool who can see into the idyllic past. She is much respected by the local people, who believe she is "gifted" and bring the afflicted to her.

This dramatic, not to say melodramatic, tale is told, as ever, crisply and freshly. The house-burning is stunning in its impact; Willie and Marianne's hesitant lovemaking and the slow decline of Mrs. Quinton bring out all of Trevor's delicate observation. And the book jacket suggests that we read *Fools of Fortune* straight, as a powerful account of lives ruined by history, of fools destroyed by fortune.

It is not that simple. Trevor, characteristically, sounds some discordant notes. In a long central episode, for example, Willie goes to one of Trevor's awful public schools, and one night he sees a former teacher—"I was sacked for sodomy"—climb a ladder and carefully make water over the sleeping form of a fellow teacher who many years before had turned him in. Again, the key has changed; but this vengeful pissing surely parodies at length the whole novel's preoccupation with revenge, or at least defuses its impact in a familiar disturbing way.

The final chapter creates similar problems. It's a scene of general reconciliation, of a world gone beyond vengeance. But Trevor, who deftly changes style and tone throughout the novel, here chooses to write in an amalgam of romantic early Yeatsian wistfulness (the evening is full of the linnet's wings), lofty piety in a *Book of Common Prayer* mode (O Lord now lettest Thou Thy servant) and—no doubt to anchor us back into the real, to assure us that real people have led these fantastic lives—a flat everyday prose featuring trams, the laundry and chicken stew. Some strange narrative games are being played. The reunion of the aged star-crossed lovers ("Pleasanter to be here, he reflects, than seeing out his days in the Ospedale Geriatrico. . . . The skin of his hairless head feels tight, like a shell") surely parodies the happy endings of romantic novels.

As in some of the short stories, one is left with a sense of uncertainty. Trevor, as I have suggested, has been working to expand his range. *Fools of Fortune*, like "Matilda's England" and "Beyond the Pale," clearly proposes some big allegorical meanings—violence and vengeance are to be lived out and Anglo-Irish relations to survive in the mystically peaceful person of Imelda—or something on those lines. Trevor is adept as ever in exploring his preferred personal themes, but in confronting these larger issues he seems to be uneasily working against his own imagination, which really hasn't much to say about them. He therefore retreats, covering his tracks with his old tricks, like one of his own outrageous janitors. The truth is he is much better off, if he would be content to stay there, in his uniquely observed microcosms of eccentric human encounters. □

Love Among the Philologists

NANCY FORBES

WISE VIRGIN. *By A.N. Wilson. Viking. 186 pp. $13.95.*

Wise Virgin—the sixth book by British novelist and editor A.N. Wilson and the first to be published in America—is a comedy of manners, with the satirical characterizations, the misfiring conversations, and the heartfelt but slightly ludicrous amours which belong to the genre. But the genuine fondness that the author feels toward his characters lifts the book out of its generic confines and gives it generous dimensions.

Giles Fox is a fussy and embittered academic ("When people asked him his 'period' he always liked to shatter them with the pedantic reply, 'Somewhere between 1213 and 1215' "), who lives alone with his beautiful 17-year-old daughter, Tibba, on Hermit Street in London. Giles's ascetic way of life has kept Tibba conspicuously unworldly: " 'You and I are born out of time,' he had said to her so often. It might have been true of him: Tibba had not been given the option." He depends on her absolutely, now that he has lost two wives and gone blind. Dutifully, she reads aloud to him every night, despite her stammer (although she prefers the "shallow piffle" of Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard and Virginia Woolf to Giles's favorites, the "giants" Scott and Trollope, their tastes "gloriously overlap" with *Northanger Abbey*). She also prepares all his meals:

> Cold meat, noodles, and olives were his staple food. . . .[Tibba] pined for variety: chilli con carne, Wiener

Nancy Forbes is a critic and short-story writer.

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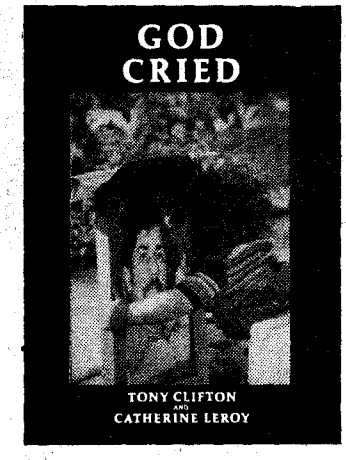

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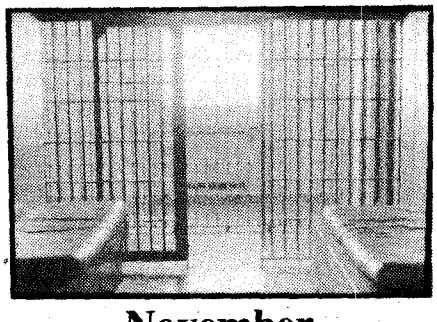

November

6

1945–HUAC begins an investigation of seven radio commentators. HUAC spokesperson: "The time has come to determine how far you can go with free speech."

1968–At an RMN victory party, advance man J. Roy Goodearle: "Why don't we get all the members of the press and beat them up? I'm tired of being nice to them."

1976–Disclosure of Operation Shamrock: since 1947, RCA Global, ITT World and Western Union International have made international telegraph traffic available to the NSA.

schnitzel, fish and chips, biryani, *boeuf en daube*. Father merely said that life was too short to spend more of it than one had to sitting on the lavatory.

It is one of the many ironies of *Wise Virgin* that Giles will, in a later chapter, undergo a spiritual revolution while sitting on the lavatory.

What Tibba cannot do for Giles, Louise Agar, the book's other virgin, does. She is his assistant, helping him transcribe the final version of his life's work, the definitive edition of a minor medieval text called *A Tretis of Loue Heuenliche*. Louise, now in her late 20s, once flirted with the idea of becoming a nun, and lives with her mother, who has "a hip." She is madly in love with Giles, whose work she discovered during her years as a medievalist at Cambridge: "Her old tutors at Girton had both written books. . . . But these had not the magic of Fox on 'Some diphthongs.' " Traveling to Giles's house every day to work "was a journey far deeper than the outer eye could have perceived, if it only saw her clambering, or (unkindly thought), her galumphing aboard the red electric train . . . in that brown coat of hers."

Another set of characters—chief among them Giles's pretty sister, Meg, and her schoolmaster husband, Monty Gore—lives a couple of hours away at Pangham, an exclusive preparatory school. Here, the satisfactions that this rather jaunty pair takes in school life have been marred by the arrival of Piers Peverill, an arrogant, seductive boy who has committed every outrage from gambling to getting a girl pregnant. And yet he manages to wheedle his way out of all Monty's attempts to expel him:

> Every housemaster sooner or later finds himself landed with a difficult customer; but Fate had bowled a googly when Monty Gore found himself saddled with four or five years of Peverill.

The novel opens with Louise Agar's sudden marriage proposal to Giles. Giles responds to this most innocent declaration with an available feeling of his own: lust. Having thus set his plot in motion, Wilson cleverly moves it along, unearthing crises, revelations and insights on the way. All comes to a resolution on Christmas Day, with a surprisingly sweet and forgiving scene between Giles, Louise and Louise's mother on the one hand, and Tibba and Piers on the other.

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Wise Virgin is what might be called a "readerly" book, in that much of the humor arises out of textures of language incongruously juxtaposed. Wilson sets modern usages off in quotations, like a man apologizing for vulgar relatives ("Of the hundred or so people in the world who knew what Giles was 'up to' in the scholarly field, Miss Agar was the closest he had to a 'fan'"). Meg and Monty have developed a delightfully ingrown shorthand: "Quite a nice bish" is their way of referring to the local bishop. Tibba's schoolgirl involvement with Virginia Woolf produces imaginary conversations with her beloved speech therapist, in which she says, "I sit here and try to fix my concentration on the whole incandescent moment, this moment, here, today, in the railway carriage." Allusions to works of literature abound. An overriding irony exists in the contrast between the actual passionate kissing which goes on in the novel and the word "kisse" or "kesse" in the *Tretis*, the spelling of which decides Giles's whole career as a philologist. The book ends with the orthographic "kesse" in deep trouble, but with the kiss of passion doing nicely.

Although *Wise Virgin* maintains a delicately dry tone throughout, it isn't merely a satire. Not only do the social worlds of the characters suffer unexpected upheavals and regroupings, so too do their domestic, professional and inner lives. The unpredictability of the changes gives the book its force, although that force is rather modest. It's as if Wilson is unwilling to move the reader too deeply. He prefers to provide a more manageable, civilized experience. This decision is regrettable, since he's clearly a novelist capable of more power than he's exercising at present. Nonetheless, *Wise Virgin* is refreshingly redemptive—not to mention funny. □

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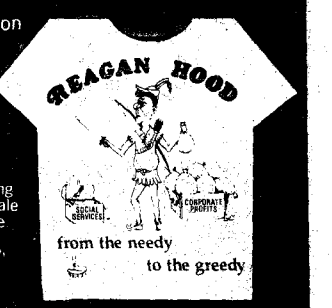

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POMP & CIRCUMSTANCES.

Science Marches On

Mrs. Stein then culls the results of the latest clinical observations of childhood development. . . .What she found can most simply be described as an update and refinement of the Freudian model. For instance, little girls don't really experience penis envy. They simply perceive themselves as "damaged goods," and try to make up for it by being "sugar and spice."

Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, "Books of The Times,"
The New York Times

Laughter, the Best Medicine

"Saul Bellow was here on campus in 1953," says the spry, 74-year-old Baker, who retired from teaching in 1976. "Long before he won the Nobel, I thought Bellow was the most interesting writer of that generation. Bellow could have you reeling on the floor with laughter when he told jokes. In fact, Delmore Schwartz ("In Dreams Begin Responsibilities") was here at that time as well. He was not in very good mental shape and Bellow had to ride herd on him. Very often during that year Schwartz would come into my office and ask me to get him a full professorship, which at that time was impossible. He would be full of a nearly psychotic self-pity and great tears would run down his cheeks which he would wipe away with filthy hands. I'd have to get Bellow, who would come and tell a few Yiddish jokes to snap Schwartz out of it."

"Carlos Baker Gets Critical,"
M Magazine

Scoop: The Last of the Just

There is an old belief in the Judaic tradition that at any moment in history goodness in the world is preserved by the deeds of nine just men who do not know that this is the role the Lord has given them. It is a thought to which one has returned these last days. For if it be so, and of course in the large sense it *is*, Henry M. Jackson was one of those men. There could be no more telling evidence than that this would never have occurred to him.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, newsletter to constituents

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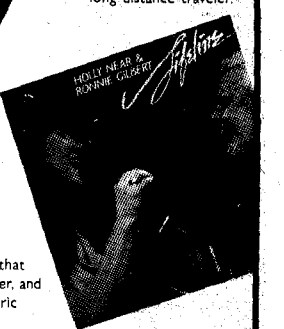

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JAZZ.

PETER WATROUS

Ballad of the Fallen

When jazz bassist Charlie Haden's "Liberation Music Orchestra" was released in 1969, it was justly hailed as a masterpiece, not because it was especially innovative but because it was a perfectly balanced meeting of overt political intentions and gifted writing and arranging. By including on the record a lament for the Democratic Convention of 1968, an Ornette Coleman song titled "War Orphans," a tribute to Che Guevara and four songs from the Spanish Civil War, along with a big chunk of free improvisation, Haden translated the 1960s into music. In less capable hands, the whole project might have looked a little dusty today. Instead, the music still sparkles after almost fifteen years, thanks to the luminous, pared-down arrangements. Too bad for Carla Bley, the arranger and composer of many of the songs, the group's pianist and the person whose identity is most clearly stamped on the music: the record is credited solely to Haden.

Almost a decade and a half later, in a period of cold war revivalism, Bley and Haden have collaborated on a second orchestral work, "Ballad of the Fallen" (ECM Records, 1248), and look here—social progress: Bley's name is near the top of the starkly handsome cover, sharing the billing with Haden.

It would be hard to come up with two esthetics further apart than those of Haden and Bley: Haden called his group Liberation Music Orchestra, and writes songs titled "Silence" and "A Song for Che"; Bley fronted a punk band called Penny Cillen and The Burning Sensations and writes songs called "Reactionary Tango" and "Wrong Key Donkey" and suites titled "A Genuine Tong Funeral" and "Escalator Over the Hill." Haden is a profound bass player—he was Ornette Coleman's ideal bassist on and off for twenty-five years—and his playing is earthy and utterly individual. He can wield his profundity like a lead pipe, though: after a night of his despairing, portentous bass arias, I want to go home and kick the cat. Carla Bley would record the cat screeching as it's being kicked and include it on a record. She draws on just about every variety of Western music: tangos clash with church music tonalities, blasts of German oom-pah with European art songs. At her most sedate she offers up burnished jazz classics, tunes like "Ida Lupino" and "Ictus"; at her most raucous she produces the musical equivalent of Groucho Marx and Margaret Dumont meeting over a cup of hallucinogens.

But Haden and Bley round off each other's edges, and "Ballad of the Fallen," which returns to the Iberian and Catalonian beauty of the Spanish Civil War songs while drawing on more recent revolutionary songs from Chile and El Salvador, is a mature piece of work that goes beyond the original success of "Liberation Music Orchestra."

Imitating Hispanic music is easy: listen to any commercial using a Latin-American backdrop, or to any of the remaining jazz-rock groups that clumsily appropriate "Spanish" themes. Bley does the reverse: she distills the essence of the source material. By varying the instrumental texture of the group (two trumpets, French horn, trombone, tuba, three saxophones, piano, guitar, bass and drums), and by reining in and articulating the rhythm section, she underscores the dignified beauty of the melodies. She keeps to the relatively simple harmonic structure of the folk song—upon which the civil war songs are based—and allows the integrity of the music to present itself. The record flows like a suite, with tight, meticulously arranged pieces joined by interludes of free or near-free improvisation by one member of the group plus the rhythm section. And the crystal-clear arrangements avoid the harsh martial spirit that some of the material implies. The improvisations, by jazz masters Don Cherry and Dewey Redman, among others, and by Bley and Haden themselves, are as inspired as the settings—and the political sentiment behind them—are worthy. □

Peter Watrous has written on jazz for The Village Voice *and* OP.

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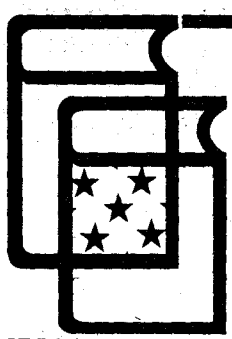

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N	■	B	■	T	■	E	■	I	■	T	■	R	■	T
T	H	E	S	H	I	P	O	F	S	T	A	T	E	■
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B	E	S	T	R	I	D	E	■	C	R	A	D	L	E
A	■	■	■	B	■	■	■	■	D	■	■	■	■	S
N	A	P	E	R	Y	■	F	O	R	E	N	S	I	C
K	■	U	■	A	■	E	■	X	■	M	■	U	■	E
■	S	P	R	I	N	G	Y	A	C	A	T	I	O	N
S	■	P	■	N	■	G	■	L	■	L	■	C	■	D
T	E	E	T	E	R	S	■	A	S	I	N	I	N	E
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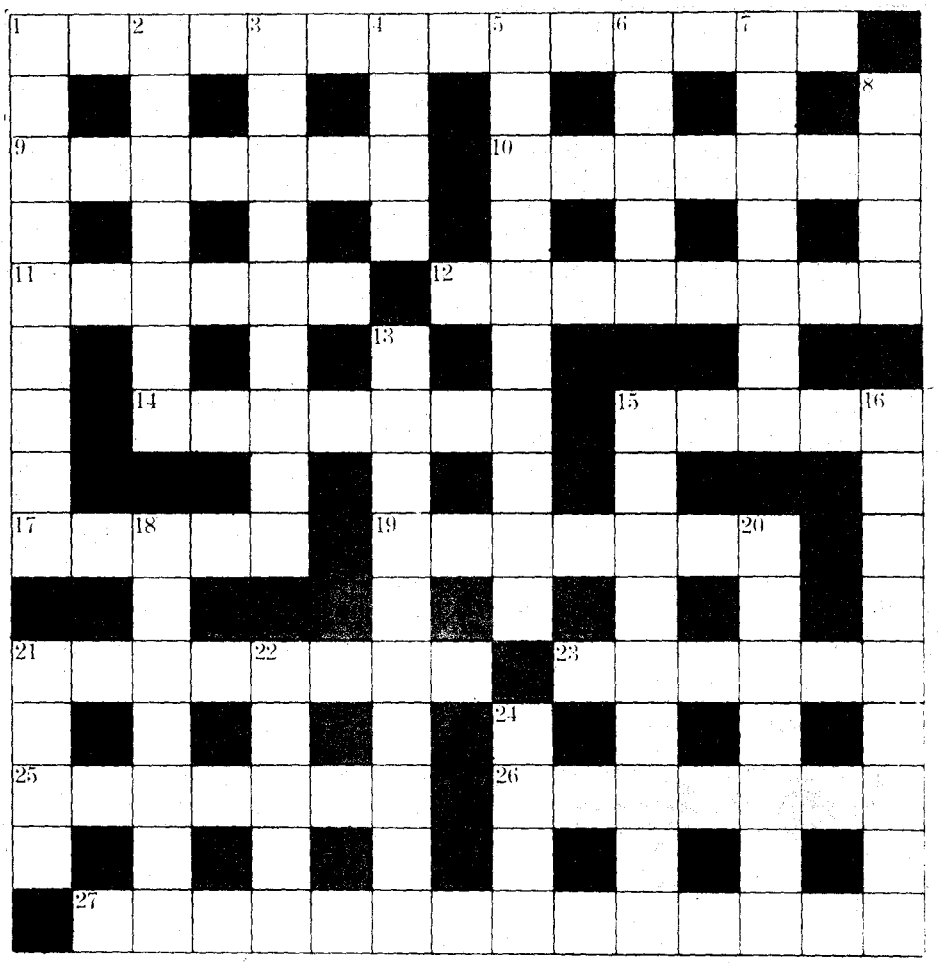
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 27 It meant more than the simple statement, "I don't owe nobody nothin'!" (3,11,2,12)
9 Prokofiev's love was for three. (7)
10 Strangely enough, his letters have no stamp! (7)
11 Doctrine that Eric the Red could have told his son. (6)
12 Indentations between periods. (8)
14 Perhaps marks over letters. (7)
15 See 18 down
17 More than one in flight, no doubt. (5)
19 But Ophelia never went to one. (7)
21 Supposed to be the answer. (8)
23 Perhaps glues little pieces of wood. (6)
25 A differently designed car is, or a privateer. (7)
26 A Shakespearean character, with false hair, too. (7)
27 See 1 across

DOWN

1 They may slip and slide, with the broom sent helter-skelter. (9)
2 Brass marker, of a sort. (7)
3 It turns white and stiffens. (9)
4 Not the first part of 24. (4)
5 What dictators are doing (or others with a new wrinkle) with irons again. (10)
6 An unusual state, in one sense. (5)
7 With more concentration, one solution leads to another by means of this. (7)
8 Formic acid containers. (4)
13 Where you can still scan things without reaching the same sound conclusion. (5,5)
15 Buck up, perhaps, when about to come in—it might be recorded again. (9)
16 A massive variety of talc, so a step on it would be false. (9)
18 and 15 across In essence, you might find it a fast rooster! (5,2,5)
20 A cut any place on the map could produce. (7)
21 This fairy gets hit by a stick quite often. (4)
22 Track-follower put in condition. (5)
24 An odd number of digits should go into each. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

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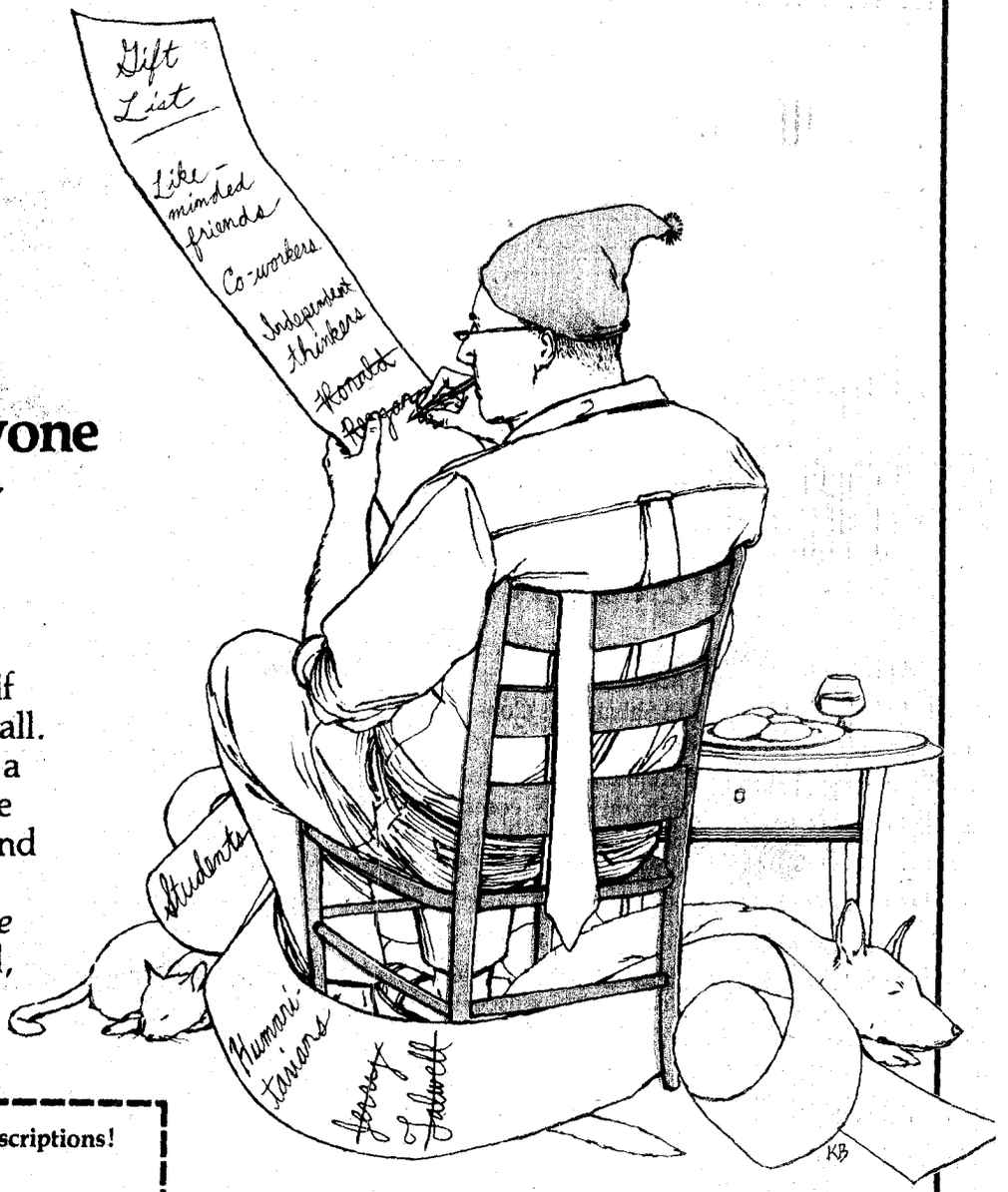

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